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ABSTRACT

The 71st Texas Legislature established several pilot programs for the 1989-90 and 1990-91 school years with the aim of improving the academic performance of and reducing the dropout rate of public school students. This report combines information about pilot programs from these 2 school years with cost surveys and descriptions of the programs. Each program is described and evaluated, and difficulties each pilot site encountered in implementing the programs are discussed. Seven pilot programs were established: prekindergarten for 3-year-olds programs, academic programs for students below grade level, high school equivalency examination programs, programs for elementary at-risk students, school-age pregnancy and parenting programs, parent involvement and parent education programs, and technology-demonstration programs. The pilot programs helped advance the State Board of Education goals established in the "Long-Range Plan for Public School Education (1986-90)." Despite difficulties implementing the programs and unsure funding, the programs successfully served substantial numbers of students, parents of students, and children of students. An appendix identifies the sites at which pilot programs were established. (JPT)

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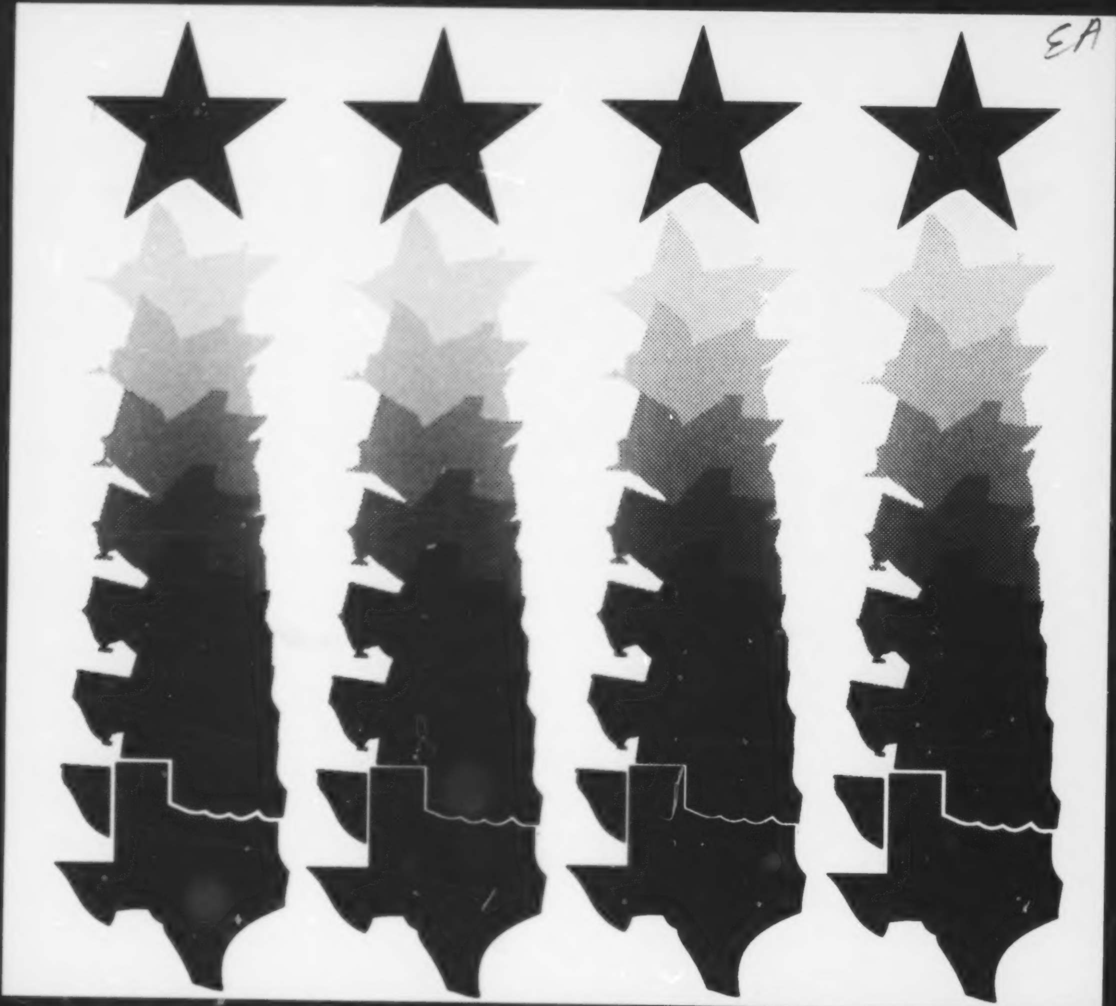

EXPANDING THE BOUNDARIES:

PILOT PROGRAMS ESTABLISHED BY THE 71ST TEXAS LEGISLATURE

EA 024 775

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Final Report
from the State Board of Education

September 1992

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EXPANDING THE BOUNDARIES: PILOT PROGRAMS ESTABLISHED BY THE 71ST TEXAS LEGISLATURE

Final Report
from the State Board of Education

September 1992

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Austin, Texas

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September 1992

The Honorable Ann W. Richards,
Governor of Texas
The Honorable Bob Bullock,
Lieutenant Governor of Texas
The Honorable Gibson D. Lewis,
Speaker of the House
Members of the 72nd Legislature:

The Texas Education Agency has completed its report on the pilot programs established by Senate Bill 417, Senate Bill 650, and House Bill 1292 of the 71st Legislature. This report evaluates pilot program activities during the 1989-90 and 1990-91 school years.

The enabling legislation required reports to the 72nd Legislature on the School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program and the Program for Elementary At-Risk Students. This report also evaluates the Prekindergarten Program for Three-Year-Olds, the Academic Programs for Children Below Grade Level, the High School Equivalency Examination Program, the Parent Education and Parent Involvement Program, and the Technology Demonstration Program.

The State Board of Education hereby submits this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Crawford

Carolyn Honea Crawford, Chairman
State Board of Education

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Expanding the Boundaries of School:
Pilot Programs Established by the 71st Texas Legislature

Final Report

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Report on Pilot Programs Established by the 71st Texas Legislature

Executive Summary

The 71st Texas Legislature established pilot Prekindergarten for Three-Year-Olds Programs, Academic Programs for Students Below Grade Level, High School Equivalency Examination Programs, Programs for Elementary At-Risk Students, School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Programs, Parent Involvement and Parent Education Programs, and Technology Demonstration Programs.

Support for these programs came from newly appropriated funds and funds from the Compensatory Education Allotment of the Foundation School Program. The legislative acts establishing these programs had two goals -- improvement of academic performance and reduction of the dropout rate.

This report combines program information gathered during the 1989-90 and 1990-91 school years with cost surveys and descriptions from a subset of the pilot programs.

Pilot sites began operating during the middle of the 1989-90 school year. In their first partial year, these 82 pilot sites in 58 districts and one service center served more than 7,000 individuals. These individuals included not only enrolled students but parents as well as offspring of enrolled students. By the following year, the number of sites had increased to 151 in 108 districts and one service center. The number of program participants exceeded 23,000, including more than 13,000 students, 7,000 parents, and 3,600 offspring.

Program activities focused on these participants ranged from educationally and technologically innovative instructional strategies to child care to classes in literacy, parenting, and child development. Many of these activities took place outside of the school day, in the summer, and/or in locations away from school campuses. In establishing these pilot programs, the Legislature induced the state's educators to expand the boundaries of Texas schools.

Several of the lessons learned from these pilot efforts have been applied as the programs spread to districts across the state. The need to serve both pregnant and parenting students, the importance of child care, and the critical role of transportation have all been incorporated into the administrative procedures supporting services to parenting students funded now through the Compensatory Education Allotment. State law concerning in-school high school equivalency programs has been amended to increase the number of prospective and actual dropouts that have access to such programs. The need for realistic and timely staff development has been communicated to districts as they bring new technologies onto their campuses and into their instruction. Finally, board rules concerning quality standards for prekindergarten programs now recognize the fact that effective prekindergartens can operate not only on school campuses but also in community sites as well as homes.

Expanding the Boundaries of School:
Pilot Programs Established by the 71st Texas Legislature
Final Report

INTRODUCTION

Statutory Background

A number of bills enacted by the 71st Texas Legislature established pilot programs with the ultimate goals of improving the academic performance of and reducing the dropout rate among public school students. Funding for the implementation of these programs combined newly appropriated funds with funds from the Compensatory Education Allotment of the Foundation School Program and exceeded $13 million for both fiscal year 1990 (FY90) and fiscal year 1991 (FY91). Table 1 identifies the authorizing legislation, the corresponding Texas Education Code reference, and source of funding for each of the seven pilot program areas examined in this report.

Relationship to Educational Goals

The establishment of the pilot programs by the Legislature complemented the establishment of educational goals by the State Board of Education in its ***Long-Range Plan for Public School Education (1986-1990)***. The seven pilot programs that began in the spring of 1990 addressed several of the goals identified in that plan.

Three pilot programs directly addressed the first of those goals - that all students meet or exceed educational performance standards. *Prekindergarten Programs for Three-Year-Olds* helped develop the foundations on which subsequent academic success depends. *Academic Programs for Children Below Grade Level* used innovative instructional methods to improve the academic performance of underachieving first through third grade students. Finally, *High School Equivalency Examination Programs* helped credit-deficient but capable students to obtain a valid high school credential.

The ***Long-Range Plan*** envisions programs through which all students realize their learning potential and prepare for productive lives. A familiar set of social and economic factors limit the ability of many students to take advantage of educational opportunities. *Programs for Elementary At-Risk Students* targeted such non-academic impediments to school performance by establishing teams of school counselors and social workers to work with at-risk elementary students and their families. Another group of students whose educational potential often remains unrealized are those whose educational careers end because of early parenthood. *School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Programs* provided instructional and support services to enable student parents to remain or return to school to finish their high school education.

Recognizing that the schools cannot be expected to succeed without the support of the families and communities that they serve, the ***Long-Range Plan*** also calls for the involvement of parents in the improvement of schools. This goal was addressed by *Parent Education and Parent Involvement Programs* that enlisted parents as the school's active partners in children's education.

In establishing the goal of continually improving instructional programs through the use of effective innovations, the *Long-Range Plan* draws attention to the educational potential of new technologies. Various means of realizing this potential were explored in ***Technology Demonstration Programs*** that applied emerging technologies to instructional delivery and classroom management.

Pilot Programs and Public Education

The legislation creating the pilot programs asked educators to examine the current limits of age, parental involvement, technology, and teaching. Hence, the pilots helped to expand the boundaries of public education - an expansion involving new ideas and new programs for new populations of students.

The expansion began with the boundary marking the content and form of teaching, enlarging the traditional image of attentive pupils arrayed before teachers to include the new images associated with cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and individualized learning. The boundaries marking the age ranges of those served by school were extended into early childhood by prekindergarten for three-year-olds and into adulthood by parent education efforts. The pilot programs expanded the boundary of the physical locations where schooling occurs - with programs for parenting students extending it beyond the classroom into the child care facility, programs that utilize social workers and involve parents moving it beyond the campus and into the home, and programs that provide telecommunications-based learning opportunities expanding the boundary beyond the geographic borders of the school district.

Administration of Pilot Programs

In administering the pilot programs, the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) goals were to provide program support and to conduct comprehensive program evaluation. Instead of prescribing solutions to the problems encountered by pilot sites, the agency followed sites as they confronted and resolved the difficulties facing their programs. While agency staff provided technical advice and clarified regulatory issues, the responsibility for deciding how a program should operate rested with the staff at each pilot site. This emphasis on local control over the design and implementation of programs was consistent with the ongoing decentralization of educational decision making.

Legislative Reporting Cycle

In administering the pilot programs, the agency committed itself to a two-stage reporting process to the 72nd Legislature - an interim report and this second, more comprehensive report. In addition, the enabling legislation for several pilot programs contained reporting requirements to the 73rd Session of the Legislature.

Report Format

This introduction is followed by reviews of each of the seven pilot programs that were established beginning in the spring of 1990. Each review describes the pilot program, evaluates activities in FY90 and FY91, and discusses the concerns and difficulties encountered by the pilot sites. For pilot programs that were cost surveyed, the results of those surveys and descriptions of surveyed programs are also given. The report concludes with a summary of lessons learned from the pilot programs. An appendix identifies the sites at which pilot programs were established.

Expanding the Boundaries of School:
Pilot Programs Established by the 71st Texas Legislature
Final Report

Table 1

Statutory Bases and Funding of Pilot Programs

Program	Bill Citation	TEC Citation	Funding Source
Prekindergarten for Three-Year-Olds	[1] SB 417, p. 26, Sec. 2.14	§21.136	$1,000,000 annual appropriation
Academic Programs for Children Below Grade Level	SB 417, p. 2, Sec. 1.03	§11.191	$500,000 annually from Compensatory Education; Amount set by Commissioner
High School Equivalency Examination	SB 417, p. 86, Sec. 6.01	§11.35	No specifically designated state funds.
Elementary At-Risk	SB 417, p. 14, Sec. 2.01	§11.2052	$500,000 annually from Compensatory Education Allotment
School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting	[2] SB 417, p. 28, Sec. 2.15	§21.114	$10,000,000 annually from Compensatory Education Allotment
Parent Education and Parent Involvement	HB 1292, p. 1, Sec. 1	§21.929	$1,000,000 annual appropriation
Technology Demonstration	SB 650, p. 6, Sec. 1	§14.045	Funded from the $6 million for implementing the Technology Plan

[1] Amended by SB 1 (71st Legislature, Sixth Called Session) to continue through the 1990-1991 school year only.

[2] Also provided for in SB 151, p. 1, Sec. 1 (71st Legislature, Regular Session).

PROGRAM REVIEWS

This section of the report reviews pilot program activities during fiscal years 1990 and 1991. Its purposes are to describe the programs, to present information on their implementation, and to examine their effects. Although the programs differ, the reviews of programs draw on similar data and follow similar formats.

Data Used in Reviews

Pilot sites cooperated with the TEA by responding to a number of data collection efforts. Progress Report Forms provided information on both the numbers of parents, students, and offspring of students participating in the pilot programs and the problems that the programs were encountering. Snapshot Report Forms were designed to obtain demographic information on students participating in the programs along with comparative data on non-participating students. Opinion surveys sampled participants' opinions of the programs with which they had been involved. An Annual Evaluation Report Form was designed to obtain detailed information on the implementation and effects of the pilot programs.

Because the large majority of sites combined pilot funds with other resources, reports to the TEA on the expenditure of pilot funds did not capture the true costs of these programs. Accordingly, the evaluation plan for the pilot programs included the collection of cost data from each pilot site. These data were to provide estimates of the startup and annual operating costs of the pilot programs and, when combined with outcome data, would allow cost effectiveness comparisons among programs.

Cost surveys of all pilot sites were planned for fiscal year 1991, with survey data going into the report of that year's pilot activities. Because of limited agency resources, only select sites in certain pilot programs were cost surveyed. Those programs included Prekindergarten Programs for Three-Year-Olds, High School Equivalency Examination Programs, Programs for Elementary At-Risk Students, School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Programs, and Parent Education and Parent Involvement Programs. Limited cost information was collected through the Annual Evaluation Report Form designed for the pilot Academic Programs for Children Below Grade Level.

Additional information for these program reviews was gathered during visits by agency staff to pilot sites. Agency staff visited all sites at least once and most sites were visited more frequently during fiscal years 1990 and 1991.

Format of Reviews

The review of each pilot program follows the same format. The review begins with a general description of the pilot program that specifies its goals, describes its participants, examines its components, identifies the settings and time frames in which it operates, and notes the program's unique resource requirements.

The second half of the review is an evaluation of the program's activities during fiscal years 1990 and 1991. This evaluation includes information on the numbers and types of individuals that participated in various program activities, participants' opinions of the program (where available), and the effects of the program. Analyses of costs are then presented for programs on which cost data were gathered. The review concludes with a discussion of the concerns and solutions noted during the establishment of the program.

Pilot Prekindergarten for Three-Year-Olds Programs

Description

Goals

These nine programs are intended to provide three-year-olds with experiences that contribute to subsequent success in school. As part of their attempt to leave children better able to succeed in school, these programs also try to help parents become more effective partners in the education of their children.

Participants

As required by statute, these programs enroll three-year-olds from low income families and/or families whose first language is other than English.

In addition to the statutory prerequisites, local requirements for enrollment applied by various pilot sites usually include documented completion of immunization and can include such things as access to private transport and the completion of toilet training.

While all pilot sites try to involve parents in program activities, three sites require parental attendance at such activities as a condition for the child's enrollment.

Components

The first component common to all programs is the delivery of a prekindergarten curriculum. In three instances this curriculum is a modified version of an existing curriculum designed for older students, while the remaining six programs developed a curriculum specifically for the pilot three-year-old program.

The curricula of these programs also differ in the extent to which they emphasize traditional academic performance as a regular feature of the prekindergarten class. A minority of programs make liberal use of teacher-directed, structured drill and repetition activities in an attempt to foster concept and vocabulary development. The balance of programs used less formal and more child-directed activities intended to foster the development of linguistic and social skills.

Pilot sites use various assessment tools both to establish a child's developmental status upon entering the program and to monitor the child's progress during the program. These assessments range from items drawn from standardized tests to regular observations of child activity using preset checklists to inventories of children's work and videotapes of their activity.

Three programs make a systematic effort to integrate their parental education component into their prekindergarten curriculum. This integration takes various forms - in one instance it appears as a formal schedule of paired learning activities, in another instance the lessons of parent training are applied as parents act as volunteer aides in the prekindergarten, and in a third case parents attend the prekindergarten to observe their children.

Regardless of the extent to which parent education is part of its formal prekindergarten curriculum, each program also includes some form of recurrent contact with the parents of the three-year-old. In four sites this contact occurs during visits to the child's home by program staff who act as parent educators to demonstrate the use of materials to teach the children developmentally appropriate skills. Most of the programs also regularly schedule parent group meetings whose activities range from viewing videotapes on topics in parenting and child development to the construction of toys to field trips. One site operates an English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) class for the parents of children in the prekindergarten program while another schedules its parents' meetings to make it easy for parents to attend a district-sponsored ESL class in the same facility. A few sites also produce and circulate a newsletter among parents with children in prekindergarten.

Individual programs incorporate a variety of other components such as a drop-in family resource room operated by program staff and open one day a week, day care upon completion of the half-day prekindergarten, child care during parents' meetings, program-sponsored dental screening, and, in one instance, case management by a social worker.

These programs also help their three-year-olds register and prepare for district-operated prekindergarten for four-year-olds. This assistance included curricular linkages to the regular prekindergartens as well as coordinated activities between the pilot and regular classes.

Settings

These programs operate in school, home, and community settings. In four sites, all program activities take place in the school building while two other sites operate entirely outside of the school during the academic year, limiting in-school activities to summer programs that help prepare children for the transition into school-based programs for four-year-olds. In another site, a formal prekindergarten curriculum is presented to groups of mothers and children who assemble at houses located at strategic points throughout the community.

Time Frame

One school-based site operates a full day program while at another site a half-day prekindergarten takes place within a full day "educational" day care. Program activities for three-year-olds at the remaining pilot sites are of a half-days' duration or less. The prekindergarten programs meet from once a week to daily during the school year but generally less frequently during the summer months.

Those programs that include a home visit component generally conduct such visits at least once and usually twice a month. Parents' meetings are typically held once a month.

Resources

These programs rely on a diverse set of resources. Requisite personnel include teachers certified in early childhood education, prekindergarten, or kindergarten, parent educators, day care providers, social workers, and curriculum writers. Non-personnel resources can include substantial educational supplies and materials, personal computers with specialized software, vans to provide mobile resource centers, and renovations and furnishings to accommodate children as young as 36 months of age.

In six of the nine pilot programs, the ratio of pupils to teachers was lower than 10 to one.

Evaluation

Implementation

During their initial partial year of operation, the nine pilot sites in this program provided prekindergarten for a total of 383 three-year-olds during the spring and summer of 1990. Program staff estimated that this number accounted for between a fifth and a tenth of eligible three-year-olds in their districts.

Data from the FY90 evaluation indicated that, even during a truncated years' operation, these prekindergartens for three-year-olds provided an effective means of delivering "one stop" service to families with young children. Fifty-five percent of the families with three-year-olds enrolled during FY90 obtained social work case management services through the program while 46% similarly accessed health services.

A total of 484 parents and significant others participated in FY90 activities sponsored by the prekindergarten pilots. Parents' contact with the pilot programs most frequently (465) took the form of checking out educational materials (e.g., books, toys) from the resource collections maintained at many pilot sites. In excess of 300 parents participated in structured learning and developmental activities with their three-year-olds as a result of participating in the pilot programs while 325 attended training classes sponsored by the programs.

This collection of pilot sites served 465 children in FY91. Besides participating in the prekindergarten curriculum, these children were the focus of a variety of program services, including social work/case management (45%), counseling (42%), health services (38%), and transportation (35%).

Parental participation in these programs continued at a high rate with 468 parents involved during FY91. Over 80% of these parents were active in support of their child's early education. This activity took a variety of forms, including parent training classes, conferences with program staff, checking out resource materials for use with their children, and engaging their children in structured activities. Among the resource materials loaned to parents by programs, books were the most common, followed by instructional kits and manipulatives.

Besides providing parents a means to influence the education of their children, these prekindergartens proved remarkably effective vehicles for the continuing education of adults. Data from the FY90 evaluation showed that for every three-year-old enrolled in a pilot prekindergarten at least one adult partook of the district's educational offerings. These offerings included not only classes in parenting and child development but also academic, GED, vocational, and English-as-a-Second-Language classes.

Their level of involvement with the prekindergarten programs suggested that parents regarded those programs in a positive light. Additional evidence of their regard came from opinion surveys which found that all parents responding to the survey felt the programs worthy of their time and effort and helped to meet their children's' learning needs.

All parents and program staff responding to the surveys recommended that prekindergarten for three-year-olds not only should continue to operate in their districts but also should spread throughout the state. In voluntary written comments attached to their survey responses, both parents and staff described concrete improvements in the development of children participating in the program. Parents often used those comments to express their gratitude for the program.

Balancing the evidence of the programs' popularity were the observations of relatively low attendance rates in each year's evaluation (FY90: 78%; FY91: 80%) and withdrawal rates from one in six (FY90) to almost one in four (FY91). Explanations for the low attendance rates included parents' belief that three-year-olds should not be expected to attend as regularly as older children and transportation difficulties. The limited transportation available to participating families may have also helped to explain the relatively high withdrawal rates, as could the frequent reports of separation anxiety in young families sending their first child to school.

Experienced educators versed in the tenets of child development are the keys to successful early education programs. The teachers staffing these pilot prekindergartens in FY91 had an average 8.2 years in the classroom. Besides being relatively experienced in the classroom, these teachers averaged more than 25 hours of staff development during FY91.

The effectiveness of these programs can be judged only with longitudinal data not available to an evaluation of a year's duration. However, 87% of the three-year-olds participating in these programs were reported to have demonstrated improvement in identified areas of developmental need. Portfolios documenting students' activities during the year were judged by independent, experienced assessors to indicate substantial growth.

Cost Surveys

Cost surveys were completed on seven of the nine prekindergarten pilots during the fall of 1990. These surveys estimated that the average annual cost of operating these programs was $107,773. The most costly estimate ($193,148) came from a program that operated both half-day prekindergarten and full-day child care while the least costly program ($73,031) offered a locally developed curriculum through a community-based approach. Estimates of the annual cost per pupil served by the different programs must await evaluation of program operations during the current school year.

These programs also incurred an estimated average startup cost of $28,598. Startup costs for individual programs ranged from a minimum of $9,400 for a school-based program to a maximum of $35,150 for the community-based program mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Analyses of costs by program component found that an average 54% of annual operating costs were incurred in the direct delivery of these programs' instructional components. An average of 16% of these programs estimated annual costs was incurred in planning activities while another 12% was expended on administration. These relatively high non-instructional costs presumably reflected the combined expense of devising curricula for three-year-olds and coordinating the activities of programs that generally operate beyond the school setting.

Similar analyses of the estimated startup costs of these programs found that an average 78% of such costs went to support the typical program's instructional component.

As one would expect, these programs devoted an average 79% of their estimated annual expenditures to personnel costs. In only two instances did an non-personnel object of expenditure account for more than 10% of a program's estimated annual cost - the combined prekindergarten-child care program's contract for staff to provide child-care services (30%) and the community-based program's rental of homes for class sites (27%).

An average 90% of the startup costs of such programs went to either consumable supplies (43%) or equipment (47%). The only exception to this general pattern was provided by two school-based programs who expended a quarter to a third of their startup monies on the renovation of classroom facilities.

Concerns

Among the concerns shared by many sites was dissatisfaction with the more traditional academic components (e.g., drills in tracing abstract shapes, recognizing and naming letters, etc.) that survived the translation for three-year-olds of curricula designed for older children. The teachers who delivered the modified or "downloaded" curricula were among those who strongly urged less traditional and less structured "developmentally appropriate" programs for the three-year-olds.

Staff were also dissatisfied with the tests selected for screening and monitoring their young charges. This dissatisfaction centered around a collection of issues (e.g., tests overly difficult, time-consuming, and/or not normed for three-year-olds) that undermined staff's confidence in the validity of test results. Sites that relied less on standard educational or developmental assessments and more on observational checklists, analysis of children's work, and the like generally reported fewer difficulties with and greater confidence in their tests.

Mention has been made of the favorable pupil-teacher ratio at several of the pilot sites. By way of contrast, staff at sites with ratios at or above about 15:1 were universal in citing staffing as a primary problem area in their programs. This staffing concern interacted with the issue of academically traditional versus developmentally appropriate curricula in that teachers found it difficult to administer the child-centered, multiple-activity center, and high-activity form of prekindergarten that they believed appropriate for their pupils. The effect on staff morale of this interaction between staffing and curriculum was predictable.

The need for more careful coordination between regular and pilot prekindergartens was clearly evident as programs began to implement measures to smooth their pupil's transition into the more academically oriented programs for four-year-olds. Concerns were expressed over how to insure an appropriate match between the skills, tasks, and behaviors valued in traditional early childhood education settings and those reinforced in the less traditional settings that characterized many of the pilot programs.

The relatively few problems reported by parent education and involvement components of these programs included difficulties in obtaining non-English materials for parenting classes, scheduling classes at times when parents could attend, providing child care for the three-year-olds (and siblings thereof) who parents often brought to program meetings, and insuring that the program's resource stock contained adequate amounts of the books, toys, and videos that parents looked to borrow.

A final note should be made of the somewhat unexpected problem encountered in recruiting sufficient numbers of three-year-olds for these pilot prekindergartens. Several sites found it necessary to expand their service areas to recruit their planned sample. This apparent dearth of pupils could be partly attributed to the reluctance of many parents to have children as young as three "start school." Indeed, the relatively high leaving and low attendance rates found in these programs may also reflect parents' concern over starting school at age three.

Pilot Prekindergarten for Three-Year-Olds

Program Descriptions

Arlington ISD
Brownsville ISD
Brazosport ISD
Clint ISD
Ector County ISD
Edgewood ISD
Hubbard ISD
Socorro ISD

Pilot Prekindergarten for Three-Year-Olds
Arlington ISD

Program Description

Instruction

Home Oriented Preschool Education (HOPE) combines four instructional components:

1) Home Visits: The core of the program is biweekly home visits by a teacher to model learning activities with the child, support parents' development as teachers of their own child through discussion and the provision of handouts, books, and materials from the program Resource Library, and monitor the child's development. Activities and materials for these visits are chosen to support growth in all areas - language and literacy, cognition, and social and motor skills - in developmentally and culturally appropriate ways;

2) Drop-in Time: The HOPE playroom at Atherton Elementary School is open every Wednesday from 10:00 am until 1:00 pm. Parents may bring their children into the playroom for an opportunity to interact with other children and become familiar with the "school" setting with parents nearby. There is no planned agenda for these times. Parents may visit with each other or informally with staff, use or borrow materials from the parent and children's library, and interact with their child in the playroom setting. The playroom equipment includes a large dramatic play "home" area, a doll house with furniture, an art unit with four easels, a block area with unit blocks, vehicles, animals and other accessories, a sand/water table, and a "softscape" gross motor area. There are also child-sized tables and chairs, puzzles and other manipulatives, and children's books;

3) Parent Group Meetings: Parent group meetings are scheduled approximately once monthly with nine planned for the school year and one for the summer school session. Separate meetings are held for English and Spanish speakers except for meetings that are primarily social in nature. The meetings are planned by the coordinating teacher, who usually conducts the English sessions. The bilingual teacher conducts the Spanish meetings. Meeting topics and times are set after parent needs assessments are completed. The staff is available for daytime and evening meetings, as necessary. Meetings are usually held in the HOPE facilities at Atherton Elementary School in large room equipped with adult tables and chairs, blackboards, a marker board and a TV/VCR unit. Some parent meetings are held in the other schools served by the project, one in the local branch library, and a social gathering is held at a local park. The meetings focus on supporting child development, providing good nutrition for the child and family, and making learning materials for the parent to use at home.

Supervised child care is available during all parent group meetings. Children are supervised by volunteers from the PTA, if available, or other staff members;

4) Summer School Program: An eight week classroom program operates during the summer using the program playroom and kindergarten classrooms. This program is planned around the High Scope model and teachers use a whole language approach for language/literacy development. Instructional themes focus on the child, the family, and the school environment. Materials and books from the program's lending library are also used. This school-based program provides a low adult-child ratio to smooth the child's transition into the regular prekindergarten program. Students are also provided a mid-day meal.

Support Activities

Informal case management is provided by home teachers as need was indicated or requested by families.

Planning, Training, and Administration

Curriculum development for all instructional components is primarily the responsibility of the coordinating teacher with input from other teachers. During the program's first year, the bilingual home teacher located appropriate materials for children and parents in Spanish. The curriculum materials and handouts are typed by clerks in the district's office and translated by a bilingual teacher for Arlington ISD.

A monthly newsletter to parents is written and typed by the coordinating teacher with staff input. The bilingual teacher translates and types the Spanish version.

Each home teacher is responsible for scheduling, planning, gathering materials for and recording results of her home visits. These activities plus travel time require 30-40 minutes per visit.

Attendance at a week long Parents As Teachers workshop sponsored by the Mental Health Association and discussions with the district's Director of Outside Funds constituted the preservice training for the coordinating teacher. Preservice training for home teachers consisted of informal staff discussions about the program and a packet of relevant readings selected by the coordinating teacher. Arrangements were made for the home teachers to attend a Parents As Teachers workshop as soon as one was available locally.

Continual inservice for the home teaching staff is provided through weekly staff meetings where problems and questions are addressed and new materials are introduced. The home teachers were also included in the staff training sessions held by consultants during the summer.

The coordinating teacher led a three-hour preservice training session for summer school teachers and aides. Topics covered included the implementation of the High Scope Model, curriculum and materials that were available, and expectations for conferencing and record-keeping.

A university professor provided a full-day inservice program on developmentally appropriate assessment and curriculum in developmentally appropriate practices in August. Both home and classroom teachers and assistants attended these sessions.

Primary program administration is the responsibility of the district's Director of Outside Funds. These responsibilities include grant writing, interviewing prospective personnel, budget reports, and evaluation reports to TEA. All ordering, budget records, and most typing is done by her office staff. The day-to-day program coordination is carried out by the coordinating teacher with input from other teachers. These responsibilities include registration, maintaining records, data collection, making recommendations for purchase of materials and equipment, marking, cataloging and maintaining records on materials and equipment, purchasing materials from local vendors as needed, developing information about the program for publicity and recruitment, and preparing preliminary drafts for reports.

Pilot Prekindergarten for Three-Year-Olds
Brownsville ISD

Program Description

Instruction

This program's instructional component is based on a school-based model, featuring the "El Arco Iris" program's curriculum. Lessons are presented via television, puppets, games, puzzles, musical instruments, songs, and other materials. Parents are instructed on how to use materials for enrichment in the child's home activities. The program provides instruction to four groups of twenty students. Each group receives three hours of instruction each week.

Support Activities

Guidance and counseling services are provided by the teacher, aides, and program implementor on an as needed basis.

Planning, Training, and Administration

Program planning is done at the end of each weeks activities for upcoming classes. The program implementor, teacher, and aides all contribute to the planning process.

Program administration is the responsibility of the program implementor and includes responding to TEA requests and district coordination.

Pilot Prekindergarten for Three-Year-Olds
Brazosport ISD

Program Description

Instruction

This program's instructional component is a dual delivery system in which the child and parent both receive three hours of instruction in a daily school setting. There are four eight week sessions during the regular school year and one in the summer that can each accommodate 10 parents and 10 children each. Periodically, consultants are invited to instruct the parents and/or children in particular subject areas. Assessments are done on video tape before and after each program to document the child's development. Field trips are also taken 2 to 3 times a month.

Support Activities

The program includes home visits at the end of each eight week session to make sure the program is carried into the home. This also serves as an environmental study and recruiting for the next session.

Case management is provided to program families on an individual need basis.

The few parents who cannot provide their own transportation to the program are transported in the private vehicles of staff persons. Parents are transported on field trips with school district buses.

Planning, Training, and Administration

The staff attend early childhood, bilingual, and parent training workshops throughout the year.

Program staff collaborate at the beginning of the year to design the annual calender. A clerical aide then arranges field trips and consultant visits throughout the year to coincide with the calender. The instructors produce materials and handouts with the help of the aides.

The director is responsible for generating and maintaining budgets, ordering supplies and equipment, communicating with principals and supervisors, completing TEA reports, and publicizing the program. The clerical aide assists in these tasks, and also keeps enrollment, attendance, and evaluation records.

Pilot Prekindergarten for Three-Year-Olds
Clint ISD

Program Description

Instruction

The instructional core of this program is delivered in homes located at strategic points throughout this large but unevenly populated district. The families in these homes host meetings attended by neighborhood parents and children at which program staff lead discussions and activities on various parenting and developmental topics. The program reimburses the host families through a monthly rent and the installation of a telephone. These meetings take place weekly during the school year and monthly in the summer. The home-based portion of the program is extended by field trips and visits to the campus that houses the district's prekindergarten program.

Support Activities

This program provides no formal case management or service coordination, although program staff assist in registering participating children in the district's prekindergarten.

The program provides buses for field trips.

Planning, Training, and Administration

Program planning activities include the development of the curriculum presented during the group meetings.

Pilot Prekindergarten for Three-Year-Olds
Ector County ISD

Program Description

Instruction

This half-day, school-based program operates on an early childhood campus during the fall and spring semesters. Two classes meet daily in the morning and the afternoon. Each class contains 10 students and is staffed by a certified teacher and an instructional aide.

The program uses a local curriculum that is developmental in focus, emphasizes the social, affective, perceptual, and physical aspects of development, and attempts to foster language development through adult-child and peer interaction. Classes are conducted in Spanish and English. Classroom activities take place in various settings including whole group, center-based peer-peer interaction, and center-based teacher-pupil interaction.

Activities available on the early childhood campus augment the program's curriculum. Program children use the campus computer lab for 30 minutes each week, participate in a "kiddie aerobics" program, receive health and hygiene instruction from the school nurse, and go on monthly field trips.

The program utilizes assessments for both screening and evaluation. These assessments include modified versions of the pre-LAS and the CLASS.

The program's instructional activities include a parental education and involvement component. The parent education curriculum borrows heavily from the district's home-based migrant program and includes invited speakers and field trips. This curriculum is delivered during monthly group meetings held on the early childhood campus. The hour-long meetings are scheduled both during the day, to coincide with parents' delivering their children to the prekindergarten class, and during the evening, to accommodate parents' work schedules. Parents who participate in evening meetings can also attend district-sponsored GED and ESL classes scheduled in conjunction with the program's group meeting.

The parent education component is delivered by the school-community liaison.

Support Activities

The program does not contain a formal counseling component, although the parent education portion of its instructional component includes material that has guidance and counseling features. The school counselor's involvement in the program is limited to occasional support of instructional and assessment activities.

The school-community liaison conducts home visits through which the program provides ad hoc case management that assists families of program children to obtain support services. These home visits are also used to determine the reasons for a child's recurrent absence from the classroom.

Organized child care is provided during the parent meetings for both program children and their siblings. This service extends to parents who attend GED or ESL classes in conjunction with program meetings.

This program does not provide transportation. Parents must bring their children to and pick them up from the school.

Planning, Training, and Administration

The school-community liaison works with the district program specialist to plan parent meetings. This work includes the selection of topics and field trip sites and the recruitment of invited speakers.

The pilot program's activities are integrated with those of the early childhood campus, requiring coordination between program staff and the campus administrator. .

The program's curriculum is reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis. This review activity involves planning and coordination between the pilot staff and teachers of older children on the campus.

The district bilingual and migrant education director provides training on early childhood topics to program staff. As part of their training, program teachers are required to attend the monthly parent education meetings. Staff receive further training on topics in early childhood from the regional service center and through attendance at conferences concerning bilingual and kindergarten education.

The administrative responsibilities for the program are shared among the district director and program specialist and the principal of the early childhood campus. These responsibilities include interviewing and hiring staff, record keeping for fiscal and evaluation purposes, reporting on the program to district trustees and the TEA, and responding to other schools' enquiries about the program.

Pilot Prekindergarten for Three-Year-Olds
Edgewood ISD

Program Description

Instruction

This program emphasizes developmentally appropriate activities rather than the acquisition of academic skills per se. Its approach is derived from "Un Marco Abierto," a bilingual, Piagetian program that emphasizes the child's active role in development. Accordingly, daily observations of the child's activity are reviewed so that the teaching staff can tailor learning opportunities to fit the child's developmental state and interests. The goal of this flexible, developmentally-focused, and non-prescriptive curriculum is to foster development in the domains of language, logical relations, problem solving, and self-esteem. This instructional component is part of both the full-day education/child care for children whose parents work, study, or train full time as well as the half-day education prekindergarten for children of families with one or no working parent.

The program also contains a parental education component that includes evening meetings, toy-making classes, and classroom observation and participation. AVANCE, a private, non-profit parent education agency, is contracted to provide the evening meetings and toy-making classes. The toy-making classes meet one hour before the district's ESL class, thereby serving as a hook for the ESL class. Although it is not enforced, there is a requirement that parents attend 70% of the evening meetings and perform classroom observations once every six weeks.

Support Activities

This program does not contain a formal counseling component but the school nurse counsels parents on child health on an as needed basis.

This program does not include a formal case management component but the district counselor/social worker is available on an as needed basis.

This program's child care component wraps around its instructional component in that contracted YWCA staff provide child care before and after school and during naptime. (These same staff function as teaching aides during the instructional portion of the program.) Since the instructional prekindergarten operates for only 10 months, the child care component operates on its own during the summer months. The child care program is inspected and licensed by TDHS. The program's child care component includes food prepared by a district food service worker.

Although this program does not provide transportation services, it does have bus tokens for use by parents traveling to and from program-related activities.

Planning, Training, and Administration

Meetings are held two or three times a week for planning program activities (e.g., field trips), program review, curriculum development, lesson planning, and development of the program replication manual. An important and recurring aspect of program planning is the collection of data on current and former enrollees of the program. These data include family social and medical histories, parent interviews, daily child observations, and perceptual screenings. Staff of Partnership for Hope and Intercultural Development Research Associates (IDRA) consult on development of the curriculum as well as the replication manual.

Staff training in child development, early childhood education, and parent education is provided by consultants contracted from IDRA, AVANCE, and local universities as well as district specialists in Special Education and Early Childhood Intervention Programs. Staff also attend local and out-of-town conferences and workshops.

Pilot Prekindergarten for Three-Year-Olds
Hubbard ISD

Program Description

The state-funded pilot is merged with an existing Head Start program, the two programs operating in the same facility located on the district campus. The prekindergarten program includes both three- and four-year-olds and operates as a full day program. Because the district operates the only early childhood center in the area, the program receives students from several outlying areas. Besides its operation during the regular school year, the program offers a 12 week summer session limited to 20 students.

Instruction

Instruction takes place in large and small group settings organized around learning centers. Instruction is intended to promote cognitive development, music appreciation, motor development, and social development. Systematic observations of children's spontaneous and elicited activities help to determine developmental status and chart student progress.

The curriculum was adapted by the program teacher from Crosscuts, a state adopted prekindergarten for four-year-olds curriculum. The curriculum is organized in thematic units. A conscious effort has been made to ensure that both the curriculum and the materials that support it are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

The school-based curriculum is augmented by parent training sessions on topics such as the construction of learning manipulatives, children's books, whole language, music, and movement, and children's developmental needs. These training sessions are held throughout the school year and are presented by consultants from various fields relevant to parenting and child development. Monthly field trips to sites relevant to lesson topics further complement the curriculum.

Support Activities

Although the program does not include a formal counseling component, guidance and counseling are implicit in many contacts between families with prekindergarten students and the program coordinator, school nurse, and district speech therapist. The parent training sessions also provide informal counseling.

A health coordinator supported by the district and Head Start checks the health records of and conducts vision and hearing examinations on children enrolled in the pilot prekindergarten. A psychologist supported by Head Start is also available to assess any of the program children.

Dental assessment is provided through the a dentist under contract to Head Start as well as through a local dentist who donates services. A district speech therapist screens all program students and works individually with those who have special speech therapy needs.

A district bus operates year round for students residing within the district. Families living outside of the district must use their own means to transport their children to and from the program.

Planning, Training, and Administration

Weekly staff meetings are conducted to keep the teacher and paraprofessional informed about students and lessons. The program coordinator writes the lesson plans, does program scheduling and meets with other staff members to prepare and evaluate the program.

The teacher and paraprofessional receive training through district in-service and training sessions as well as workshops sponsored by the local service center. Staff development includes program orientation, curriculum development, and attendance at TEA meetings.

The program coordinator presents the program to civic organizations and visits with the local news media to publicize the program. The coordinator also continually updates the superintendent on program activities. A bookkeeper writes checks and keeps all financial records.

Pilot Prekindergarten for Three-Year-Olds
Socorro ISD

Program Description*

Instruction

Because this program includes both home- and school-based components, its instructional activities can be divided between the parenting and child development curriculum delivered by the program's social worker during home visits and parents' meetings and the prekindergarten curriculum delivered by teachers during the half-day program at the district's early childhood campus.

Support Activities

The program social worker counsels families during home visits and is assisted by social work interns in providing case management to families participating in the pilot program. The services coordinated through this case management include assessments conducted by specialists on the district's staff.

Babysitting is offered during the program's parents' meetings.

Planning, Training, and Administration

Program planning activities include the development of curricula for the home- and school-based components as well as surveying and recruiting children for the program.

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* This description applies to the program at the time of its cost survey in FY90. The program adopted a school-based approach for FY91.

Pilot Academic Programs for Children Below Grade Level

Description

Goals

Established in 13 districts around the state, these programs are designed to improve the academic performance of first, second, and third grade students who are performing below grade level. Two programs target performance in mathematics while the remainder focus on performance in language arts.

Participants

These programs are designed to operate in classrooms selected to include underperforming students. Paired with these "treatment" classrooms are "comparison" classrooms of comparable students receiving the campus' normal instruction. Depending on the pilot site, these classrooms can be on Chapter I campuses or campuses where the vast majority of students meet state at-risk criteria.

The methods used to judge a student's academic performance vary substantially across programs. Programs targeting language arts utilize reading achievement test scores and specialized reading inventories as well as the student's performance in classroom language arts activities. All programs consider the student's history and consider teachers' referrals. In the end, however, children may be in treatment classrooms because of factors only indirectly related to academic performance, such as the teacher's volunteering or being assigned to participate in the program.

Services

This collection of programs uses diverse curricular and instructional strategies to improve the academic performance of targeted students. Three sites employ the intensive, one-on-one approach of Reading Recovery to raise the performance of students with severe reading difficulties. Several of the programs adopt a whole language approach that seeks to forge links between listening, speaking, reading, and writing in instructional contexts that are meaningful to students. Five programs incorporate into their reading instruction a phonics-based strategy that uses repetitive activities to build associations between the sounds and symbols of language. A subset of programs feature cooperative learning, cross-age tutoring, and classroom activity areas while two pilot sites individualize instruction to fit students' individual learning styles. Seven of these pilots include a systematic parent education and involvement component that attempts to enlist parents as home-based supports for and extensions of classroom activities. One program utilizes community volunteers as tutors.

Despite their diversity, these programs share certain features. They target the motivational bases of the learning process by engaging students in meaningful tasks utilizing high interest materials. Through intensive intervention and consistent feedback, these programs provide students used to failure with evidence of success and competence. In general, then, these programs seek to foster in students both the belief that they can perform in the academic setting and the skills that such performance requires.

Settings

For the most part, these programs operate in the classroom. Exceptions to this general pattern include those sites that augment classroom activities with pull out sessions, including Reading Recovery programs, those that use the instructional specialists available on Chapter I campuses, and those whose parental involvement component extends program activities into the home.

Time Frame

These programs generally operate within the normal class day during the typical two semester school year. Exceptions include programs that organize evening parent training workshops, those that offer limited summer enrollment opportunities for students as part of their staff training activities, and the program that uses trained community volunteers to tutor students outside of the regular classroom and/or classroom hours.

Resources

With the exception of one program that depends on highly trained paraprofessionals, these programs use certified teachers to deliver their innovative instruction. The programs' major resource requirement is extensive and ongoing training that first orients teachers to the strategies and then helps those teachers maintain and enhance their skills through refresher sessions. In some instances, this training is provided by district staff previously trained in the strategy while in other instances program staff are trained by contract consultants, at service centers, and/or at institutions of higher education.

In addition to these training requirements, many of these programs also have moderate to substantial supplies and materials requirements. An example would be the integrated language curriculum that requires specialized texts, manipulatives, and other instructional aids.

Evaluation

Implementation

The substantial training requirements of these programs necessarily limited the number of students that the programs served during their initial semester. With five sites using the spring 1990 semester for staff training and another three implementing programs in only a subset of program classrooms, these pilots served 442 students during the 1989-90 school year.

Evaluation of FY90 data revealed no systematic differences between program and contrast classrooms on any measure of academic performance. Given that programs were partially implemented for at most a portion of a semester, this observation was hardly surprising. However, anecdotal reports from teaching staff indicated that children were beginning to respond to the program's innovations with heightened interest and higher levels of productivity. Students at one site were reported to have attended school more and completed more class assignments than contrast group students while those at another pilot site selected more books to read and read at a higher level than their peers in contrast classrooms.

The subset of programs that contained a parental education and involvement component worked with a total of 275 parents in FY90, two thirds of whom were females. The effectiveness of this effort was reflected in the finding of reliably higher levels of parental involvement in program than in contrast classrooms. While meeting with their child's teacher was the typical form of parental involvement, more than half of the parents checked out educational materials (e.g., story books) from the school for use at home, a third participated in a program-sponsored, structured educational activity with their child, and a quarter attended formal training sessions offered by the program.

The fuller implementation of FY91 saw the number of students enrolled in program classes increase to 684, 52% of whom were enrolled in the first grade. Approximately 17% of these students were limited English proficient while 69% were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. More than half of these students were being served in federally funded Chapter 1 programs that provide supplementary instruction for disadvantaged students. Forty-six percent of the students were Hispanic, 33% were Anglo, and 20% were African American, with less than 1% Asian or American Indian/Native Alaskan.

The high level of parent involvement observed during the programs' first partial year continued to be evident in their first full year of operation. Of the 709 parents in contact with the programs in FY91, over 97% participated in conferences with school staff while almost 70% attended a campus open house. In addition, substantial number of parents were actively involved in supporting their children's education: Sixty-four percent participated in structured activities with their children, 59% checked out materials such as books, worksheets, and manipulatives for use with their children, and 42% attended training or classes designed specifically for parents.

Parents' substantial involvement in these programs was reflected in their responses to opinion surveys. Eighty percent of respondent parents felt that the programs met their children's learning needs and that their children had a better year in school than in the past. More than 94% of parents responding to the opinion survey believed that their schools should continue to offer programs targeting children working below grade level. When parents added written comments to the surveys, the comments almost invariably pertained to some form of improvement in children's school work.

Comparably positive opinions of the programs' worth came from teachers. Eighty-seven percent of respondent teachers felt that students had a better year in school because of the programs, 93% thought that students' learning needs were better met because of the programs, and 100% believed that both their schools and schools throughout the state should have such programs.

Given their enthusiasm for the programs, teachers exhibited an understandable tendency to share details of the programs with their colleagues. In addition, program materials were in some instances distributed throughout a campus by administrators trying to defuse the potential morale problem caused when materials and specialized training went only to classrooms and teachers selected for the programs.

The sharing of information and materials between program and non-program classrooms and teachers diminished the distinction between treatment and comparison classrooms in these programs. This, in addition to the non-random assignment of teachers and students to treatment classrooms, weakened the experimental design necessary to detect program effects. Together with the relatively short time in which these programs have operated, these factors provided a likely explanation for the absence of reliable differences between participant and comparison students in attendance, grades, or standardized test scores. Given the frequent anecdotal accounts of improved student attitudes, the substantial support expressed by both teachers and parents, and the time needed for both programs and students to mature, it would be reasonable to expect evidence of more concrete effects from subsequent evaluations of these programs.

Program Costs

The extensive staff development required by these programs was first evident in the almost 1100 hours of training received during the spring and summer of 1990 by the 81 teachers, instructional aides, curriculum specialists, and administrators involved in the pilot program. This theme continued through FY91, during which 280 staff received over 1400 hours of training. This level of staff development translated into reported annual training budgets that averaged almost $10,250 per program, approximately 10% of the average program's budget.

Although programs expended an average of 39% of their annual budgets on staff salaries and fringe benefits, the largest portion of the average annual budget (43%) was expended on materials for the use of program staff and students.

Concerns

The training requirements of these programs gave rise to a variety of problems. Some sites attempted to condense training schedules to the point that staff could neither assimilate nor apply the training. Since most staff undergoing training for the pilot programs were classroom teachers, the demands of that training complicated the operation of those classrooms. Evidence that such problems were serious came during FY90 when pilot program teachers at two sites withdrew citing the pressure and disruption arising from the training schedule.

Additional concerns about these programs centered around the establishment of program and contrast classrooms on the same campus. Both the parents whose children attended and the teachers who taught in the contrast classrooms questioned and on occasion objected to not "participating" in the program. Caught in the middle on these issues was the campus principal who dealt not only with parents worried that their children were being denied services but also with teachers whose morale was hardly improved when their classrooms were designated as control or contrast. Moreover, the understandable exchange of information between program and contrast teachers on the same campus also threatened to compromise the validity of the evaluation design.

Responses to these implementation problems included a relaxation of the training regime, often featuring expansion of training into the summer months, stipends for teachers to attend training outside their contract period, and formal postponement of classroom implementation until the start of the school year.

While some degree of tension is inevitable on a campus where certain classrooms have been singled out for special treatment, pilot sites have attempted to reduce that tension through staff conferences emphasizing the value for all concerned of carrying through objective evaluations of innovative programs. Several sites have identified improved campus coordination and staff preparation as priorities for subsequent program years.

While by no means unsuccessful in attempts to enlist parents' support in these classroom-based programs, pilot sites recognized the need to improve and extend their parental involvement activities. Hence, even these most academically focused of the pilot programs discussed in this report believe it is important to incorporate parents into the educational process.

High School Equivalency Examination Pilot Programs

Description

Goals

The goal of these programs is to provide students who have no reasonable chance of earning a high school diploma with an alternative to leaving high school with no credential. Hence, these programs prepare students to earn a high school equivalency certificate through successful completion of the General Educational Development (GED) examination. Such programs are not intended as alternatives to regular high school graduation where graduation is feasible. Instead, they provide an alternative for those students whose only other alternative is no secondary credential at all.

Recognizing the many non-academic factors that make high school completion problematic for some students, these programs also attempt to provide training and counseling in employment-related areas as well as life management skills.

Participants

Two sets of students participate in these programs. The first consists of enrolled students who are not skill-deficient but who have earned insufficient academic credits to allow them to graduate with their peers. The second group is made up of dropouts under 22 years of age who are credit- but not skill-deficient. Hence, these programs involve both dropout prevention and dropout recovery.

A handful of sites limit program enrollment in some way (e.g., pregnant or parenting females, currently enrolled students, credit-deficient freshmen and sophomores).

Components

All programs provide instruction in the five subject areas addressed by the equivalency examination - writing skills, science, social studies, mathematics, and literature and the arts. Individualized and small group instruction enable these programs to offer participants flexible preparation for the examination. In several programs, instruction is partially delivered through commercial computer-assisted instruction (CAI) systems developed for GED preparation. Although student:teacher ratios in these programs can range as high as 20:1, many take advantage of self-paced arrangements (such as CAI) to allow teachers to work with smaller groups of students and/or provide intensive one-on-one tutoring.

Because of the rigor of the GED, the condensed time frame available for remediation (i.e., as little as four to six weeks), and the need to individualize each student's course plan, these programs use various assessment instruments to document an adequate level of reading ability and identify specific subject areas in need of remediation. Such assessments are performed as screens for program admission and during the course of instruction. Combined with the feedback provided by CAI preparation, these ongoing assessments enable the student's readiness for the GED to be closely monitored.

Several programs also provide some form of occupational interest assessment, pre-employment counseling, and/or job training. Because participating students can also be parents, certain programs provide some level of child care for the offspring of participating students.

Settings

These programs generally operate on high school campuses, although a few use alternative settings for their GED preparation component. Whether on a traditional campus or an alternative site, students participating in these programs typically receive a significant portion of their instruction outside of the usual classroom setting (e.g., in self-paced, CAI laboratories).

Time Frame

Most programs operate during normal school hours on weekdays. In some instances, program participants attend a full, six period class day composed specifically for the pilot while in other instances pilot program offerings are repeated in three- or four-hourly morning and afternoon sessions to accommodate employed and/or parenting students. In addition to these school day-weekday arrangements, several programs offer evening hours while one program plans a Saturday program.

Program duration ranges from a minimum of four weeks of five days per week preparation to six-hour sessions on 13 successive Saturdays. Five programs operate during some portion of the summer on either a planned or as needed basis.

Resources

Because no state funds were directly appropriated for the GED pilot program, these pilot sites draw funds and/or in-kind support from a variety of resources. Funding sources include state compensatory education allotments, Jobs Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and Carl Perkins Vocational Education funds, and other local accounts.

Programs borrow liberally from Adult Basic Education for their GED preparation curriculum and staff training. In several instances, a local curriculum can be modified so that the GED curriculum relates directly to the essential elements required for the award of course credit.

School counselors, district staff involved in at-risk efforts, teachers supported by the JTPA, state social services and employment staff, and individuals from the private sector and the community coordinate efforts through these programs.

Evaluation

Implementation

Because the 11 programs evaluated during FY90 operated for less than half of the spring semester, they reached relatively few students during that year. However, of the 71 students who did participate, 37 (52%) passed the GED test by mid-summer and the progress of another 11 (15%) was on schedule for completion of their GED preparation. Hence, two thirds of those participating in these programs either completed or could be expected to complete an equivalent to the high school diploma.

Evaluation data for FY91 came from 56 programs, including the 11 that had operated in FY90 and 45 programs that began operations in FY91. A total of 1870 students participated in these 56 programs.

Several attributes of these participants merit attention. First of all, these students were credit-deficient, with modal age of 18 but a modal grade level of 10. Twenty-eight percent of these students had dropped out before returning to the in-school GED program. As 28% were parents and 14% were employed full-time, many of these students had to balance often conflicting demands. Such demands may have contributed to the persistently low attendance rates (ranging from 51% to 64%) reported by these programs.

A student's completion of the GED test battery and eligibility for the equivalency certificate define success for these programs. By that definition, the programs had to be judged successful. Among the 11 "original" programs, 70% of participating students qualified for their certificates. Among programs establishing themselves in FY91, 58% of participating students took at least one GED test. Sixty percent of those students qualified for their certificate while another 33% passed at least one GED test. This evidence of success in both established and new sites was especially impressive in view of the fact that program participants had no reasonable expectation of completing their high school education on time, if at all.

Students, parents, and educators responding to both FY90 and FY91 surveys generally expressed strong support for the continuation of these programs. However, these respondents expressed interesting opinions on other survey items. Only 46% of respondent teachers could conclude that students in the programs had definitely had a better school year than in the past -- a striking opinion in light of the evident success of the programs. To the extent that teachers in that opinion were expressing a low regard for the programs and/or the GED credential, parents and students may have reacted to the educators' perspective. While almost half of respondent parents thought that their child would not have obtained any secondary credential except through these programs, more than a fifth of those parents could not be sure that teachers and principals were enthusiastic about the programs. A comparable percentage of students expressed the same uncertainty.

Cost Surveys

Surveys were conducted during FY91 on seven of the programs that began operation in FY90. While noting a median startup cost of approximately $25,000 and a median annual cost of almost $46,000, these surveys found marked differences in costs among programs. Startup costs ranged from less than $1,000 to almost $200,000 while annual operating costs varied from a high of $200,000 and a low of $18,800.

Higher startup costs typified programs that either relied heavily on computer-based technology or invested in the construction of a GED curriculum integrated with the regular high school course offerings.

The allocation of annual costs among program components also varied considerably across programs. The median value for the percentage of annual costs incurred in instructional activity was 56% (range 25-75%); that for support activity (i.e., counseling, guidance, case management, child care, transportation) was 23% (range 13-32%); and that for planning, staff training, and administrative activities was 25% (range 11-45%).

The relatively small number of programs that were cost surveyed provided little basis for cost-effectiveness analyses. However, programs clearly differed less in the percentage of students who earned or progressed toward the GED credential than they differed in terms of startup, annual, or per student costs. This suggested that cost factors were better as indicators of local conditions and design decisions than as guides to program effectiveness.

Concerns

One problem confronting these programs was the generally low regard in which the GED certificate is sometimes held by public school administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Attainment of a high school equivalency certificate does not preclude a student from eventually earning a diploma. Nationally, about a fourth to a third of the graduating seniors on whom the examination is normed are not able to pass the battery. In Texas, most postsecondary educational institutions accept the equivalency certificate as a direct admissions credential. Despite these facts, the negative perception of the certificate as a viable alternative to a diploma complicated the incorporation of the GED program into the district's at-risk effort. In addition, that negative perception likely hindered recruitment of students who stood to benefit from the pilot.

Although these programs built review-by-committee and pretesting into their admission screens, most reported some degree of dissatisfaction with the manner in which students were considered for enrollment. Specific recommendations centered on the more active participation of grade-level counselors in the review and selection process.

As would be expected of programs deriving support from a diverse collection of sources, problems emerged in the area of coordination. While differing in their details, these problems centered around the coordination of JTPA funds with other funds, differing eligibility criteria of students, and differences in program goals.

Additional concerns were voiced regarding the need for particular types of support for those enrolled in these programs, including child care, transportation, employment counseling, and case management. At least one site concluded that its six-week program would be more effective if extended to 12 weeks. Several programs voiced concerns over what to do with the student who completed a GED before his or her peers completed their final spring semester.

Pilot High School Equivalency Program

Program Descriptions

Brownsville ISD
Deer Park ISD
Lamar ISD
Lubbock ISD
Weslaco ISD
Wichita Falls ISD

Pilot High School Equivalency Examination Program
Brownsville ISD

Program Description

This program operates on the district's alternative high school campus, drawing students from throughout the district. Students must attend class six hours a day, five days a week. The program operates from September through May. The program is limited to pregnant students who are referred by the nurse or counselor on their home campus. Students remain in the program through their pregnancy and, unless finished with the GED, transfer back to their home campus after giving birth.

Instruction

The program's instructional core is a curriculum based upon required and elective courses that follow the state's essential elements. A district-developed curriculum is complemented by self-paced Adult Performance (APL) modules, computer-based TEAMS remediation, and a GED preparation curriculum. This instructional package allows students to prepare for the GED tests while earning credit toward graduation should they ultimately return to the diploma track on their home campus.

The student's day is divided between group and individual activities, with teachers available throughout each type of activity. Although some attempt is made to homogenize with regard to grade level, groups consist of mixed status and ability students. Individual activities center around the APL modules and the computer-based TEAMS remediation.

Students also receive instruction on topics in prenatal and child development as well as life skills management, for which they earn credit under Child Development and Life Skills. This instruction is based on New Mexico's New Beginnings program and draws from material developed by Planned Parenthood.

The APL assessment test is given to all students upon entering the program. Results of this assessment are used to tailor an educational plan to the student's strengths and weaknesses and to organize the student's GED preparation.

A paraprofessional, working under teacher guidance, provides instructional support for LEP-ESL students.

Support Activities

The counselor on the alternative campus reviews and updates the student's individualized education plan to determine the student's counseling and guidance needs. This counselor leads activities concerning practical, academic, social, and career issues. Counseling and guidance activities take place during required zero-period social skills development sessions as well in group and individual sessions throughout the school day. Pre-employment and work maturity assessments help the counselor and student address occupational issues.

The alternative campus nurse conducts a needs assessment upon the student's entry to the program and then coordinates with the campus counselor to help the student obtain appropriate services. Service needs are thereafter regularly reviewed.

Some service providers (e.g., AG, PIC) come to the campus while the nurse provides limited transport to off-campus service settings.

While the program does not include child care, staff do help students identify potential sources of child care funds available through JTPA and DHS.

Students ride district buses to and from the alternative campus.

Planning, Training, and Administration

The program uses a competency-based instructional program coordinated with state essential elements. Program staff plan counseling and guidance sessions concerning occupational preparation, personal planning, and higher education goals.

Teaching staff annually attend workshops on the application of competency-based curriculum and the tutoring of at-risk students. Staff also attend regional training sessions on topics relevant to the program's objectives.

Pilot High School Equivalency Examination Program
Deer Park ISD

Program Description

This program operates in the facility that houses the district's ninth and tenth graders and that serves as the district's alternative campus for assigned high school students and students serving on-campus suspensions. The program operates during the fall and spring semesters but not during the summer.

Instruction

The program's instructional component uses a self-paced approach to a GED-preparation curriculum with limited computer-assisted remediation. The GED curriculum is keyed to pre- and post-tests and uses a GED preparation manual. The program's teacher uses pretest results, TEAMS or TAAS scores, and the SRA test to establish the student's academic profile and determine the starting point for the self-paced approach.

The program is open entry, with exit upon completion of the GED tests. Students meet daily from 0830 to 1030 in a GED specific session that combines small group instruction and individual mastery. Students have access to the campus computer laboratory for remediation prior to and after the two hour GED session. The GED session earns no local or state credit for graduation. Students may elect to leave the session to go to work or to remain after the session to enroll in up to four credit-earning classes in the core curriculum.

Support Activities

The grade level counselor and associate principal provide counseling as needed. The counseling focuses on academic and personal issues. Campus-level counseling in crisis management and substance abuse is available to all students.

The program contains no formal case management component. Referrals by teachers and grade-level counselors plus ad hoc service coordination by the associate principal provide informal case management.

Planning, Training, and Administration

The program's teacher developed a curriculum guide based on the GED manual and related materials. The teacher's planning responsibilities include identifying eligible students and tracking students enrolled in the program.

Staff training for this program includes appropriate district in-services, attendance at TEA meetings, and informal consultation with junior college and adult basic education staff.

The program's administrative responsibilities are shared between the associate principal and teacher on the campus and district's director of planning research. The associate principal's secretary assists in administrative tasks.

Pilot High School Equivalency Examination Program
Lamar CISD

Program Description

This program operates at the district's guidance center from October through June, with open enrollment for up to 15 students. Students attend classes from at least noon until 4:00 each day and are in supervised off-campus employment during the remainder of the day. Students must be enrolled in the program for at least 11 weeks in order to become eligible to take the GED tests.

Instruction

This program's instructional component incorporates portions of the district's regular high school curriculum, CVAE cooperative training, adult basic education GED preparation, JTPA pre-employment partnership, and computer-based GED preparation.

Students are pretested with the GED placement test. These results are combined with other indices of eligibility such as achievement test results, evidence of adequate reading skills, and teacher appraisals to determine whether the student is likely to succeed in the program and to individualize the student's program of preparation. A teacher instructs small groups of students in academic areas as well as pre-employment and work maturity skills while individual students use the computer-based GED preparation.

Support Activities

Enrolled students wishing to enter the program contact their counselors for applications and eligibility criteria. The same counselors contact dropouts concerning the program. Upon receipt of application and references, counselors meet with students and parents to explain the program and arrange necessary transfers.

Once enrolled in the program, students receive academic and personal counseling from the counselor on the staff of the guidance center. Additional ad hoc counseling is provided by the program's teacher while a JTPA representative counsels graduating students regarding junior college courses, vocational preparation, and child care options.

Case management services are available through the social worker on the guidance center's staff and, for parenting students, the staff of the district's school-age pregnancy and parenting program.

Parenting students enrolled in the GED program may obtain child care through the district's school-age pregnancy and parenting program.

Planning, Training, and Administration

The program is reviewed and revised through regular meetings among the program's teacher, district instructional officers, and the district's director of special programs. These individuals also meet regularly with high school teachers to help identify students who might benefit from the program.

Program staff participate in adult basic education training and are trained by the ABE coordinator in factors necessary for successful completion of the GED. The guidance center principal also provides backup support in effective teaching practices.

General program direction comes from district program and instructional staff while daily program direction is provided by the guidance center principal.

Pilot High School Equivalency Examination Program
Lubbock ISD

Program Description

Instruction

The Academic Skills Assistance Program (ASAP) is modelled on the BRIDGES program that is currently used around the state by the Private Industry Council (PIC). In Lubbock ISD, the program operates on a magnet campus attended by students enrolled in ASAP and New Directions (a program for pregnant students) as well as students of Dunbar/Struggs High School.

ASAP is a mastery-based program that relies upon the GED preparation program of the Computer Curriculum Corporation, supplemented by small group and one-on-one instruction from teachers certified in mathematics and English. The teachers use the results from the Test of Adult Basic Education as well as those of the student's most recent California Achievement Test to determine the student's starting point on the GED curriculum. Students proceed at their own pace until their mastery level indicates readiness to take one or two of the GED tests. Students enrolled in ASAP can also take regular classes in the district.

ASAP operates year round from 0800 to 1700 Monday through Friday. To maintain their enrollment in the program, students must attend for at least four hours each day. Students must complete 200 hours and pass all GED tests to leave the program.

Support Activities

Enrolled students receive counseling from high school guidance staff before entering ASAP. Once enrolled in the program, students are counseled by the ASAP teaching staff as well as from staff of the district's at-risk office. The program teachers also deliver a 20 hour vocational and career planning guidance program called PACE. JTPA staff provide counsel on vocational and continuing education options to students who obtain their GED certificates.

Student parents enrolled in ASAP have access to child care at the child care center of the New Directions program located on the same campus. Depending on the student's annual income, this child care is either free or offered at a reduced price. The child care center operates from 0730 to 1800, Monday through Friday. This service is not available during the summer.

District-operated transport connects the ASAP site with four district high schools. A bus operated on behalf of another pilot program connects the ASAP site to a fifth high school campus. City-operated buses also serve the pilot site and bus passes are available for students enrolled in ASAP. The district-operated buses are equipped with infant seats for the offspring of parents enrolled in ASAP.

Planning, Training, and Administration

Staff training for the GED computer curriculum is coordinated through PIC and consists of a week of training by the Computer Curriculum Corporation.

The ASAP program is administered jointly by the district and PIC.

Pilot High School Equivalency Examination Program
Weslaco ISD

Program Description

Instruction

Students participating in this program attend the district high school seven hours per day, Monday through Friday. Each day includes two two-hour blocks, one for GED preparation, the other for vocational education, and neither for credit. One hour classes in self-esteem, reading, and an elective complete the school day. Students can earn credit towards graduation for each of these three classes.

The program operates during the fall and spring semesters and, on an as needed basis, during the summer. The program is open entry with open exit through either completion of the GED or reentry to the diploma track.

Instructional staff include English, math, and reading teachers, who are contracted to teach an extra hour each day, and a vocational education teacher who also teaches the self-esteem class and campus social studies.

Instructional formats include small group and one-on-one sessions. The GED preparation class uses the Cambridge curriculum, supplemented by other GED curricula, computer-assisted instruction, and videoware.

The vocational curriculum is extended by invited speakers who discuss topics that are coordinated with program- and campus-sponsored field trips (e.g., a presentation on Texas A&I's agriculture department followed by a field trip to the university's agriculture extension station).

Support Activities

The campus at-risk counselor serves the students in this program. Counseling includes academic planning, discipline management, and career, pre-college, and personal counseling. Pre-college counseling is augmented by field trips to colleges and universities. The campus at-risk program runs 48-hour retreats that focus on issues such as self-esteem and problem solving. These retreats are available to students participating in the GED program.

If needed, student parents participating in the GED program can obtain contracted child care for their offspring through the pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting program that operates on the high school campus.

The program offers transport to and from GED test sites and for group activities such as field trips.

Planning, Training, and Administration

The primary planning activity of the program is the revision of curricular materials for use in the GED preparation class.

Program staff undergo adult basic education training for delivery of the GED preparation curriculum. Staff also receive training for the self-esteem class.

The administration of the program is shared between the at-risk counselor and the assistant principal.

Pilot High School Equivalency Examination Program
Wichita Falls ISD

Program Description

This program operates during the fall and spring semesters at the vocational career center that serves students from each of the district's three high schools. Students enrolled in the GED day program are at the center from 0715 to 1435 working with other students in the Accelerated Learning Center. The GED night program is a cooperative effort between the district's adult basic education unit and the regional service center. Students in the night program are in class from 1530 to 2030.

Instruction

This program fuses the Competency-Based Diploma Program of Austin Community College with instructional and computer-based materials from the Comprehensive Competencies Program and those portions of the Steck Vaughn GED curriculum that address the GED skills that need to be developed in a particular student.

The Test of Adult Basic Education provides an initial diagnosis of a student's instructional needs. Appropriate GED instruction is then delivered -- by teachers, aides, and computers in the day program and teachers and computers in the night program. At the point where the GED pretest shows mastery in each subject area, a student is scheduled into the local GED testing center.

Support Activities

A school vocational counselor is available to students in the day program while a home-school coordinator acts as a liaison between the student's home, the GED pilot program school, and the home campus. This coordinator provides scheduling and transportation to the GED testing center.

Planning, Training, and Administration

Staff training includes instruction in the use of the computer-based components of the CCP curriculum, in services of the night program teachers by the day program teachers, and attendance at the TEA conference on GED pilot programs.

The district's at-risk coordinator who serves as the program director is responsible for coordination among the district, service center, and testing center as well as responding to the agency's reporting requests.

Pilot Elementary At-Risk Programs

Description

Goals

Statute requires these programs to establish teams of school counselors and social workers whose coordinated activities provide support for at-risk students and their families. These programs are designed to address the academic and non-academic factors that, by contributing to poor academic performance, are linked to the student's eventual dropping out of school. As their program title indicates, these pilots operate on elementary campuses.

Participants

The students served by these programs meet at least the state at-risk criteria and, usually, additional local indices of risk. Given the frequent association between school problems and dysfunction in the home, family members receiving the services of these programs include not only immediate relatives but the extended family members and significant others found in homes of at-risk students.

Components

Because statute requires districts to operate at-risk programs, these pilot efforts coordinate with and extend a basic set of services already operating on behalf of at-risk students. These services typically include identification procedures, referral mechanisms, review committees, and counseling, guidance, and remedial activities that operate at the campus level. Such campus-level services are augmented by district-wide services that may include referrals for social work, special education assessments, and counseling. The array of district-level services can vary substantially from district to district.

The pilot programs extend and enhance district at-risk programs in several ways. The expansion often starts with an extended set of criteria for identifying a student as at-risk, criteria that often incorporate information derived from the social workers' familiarity with the student's home situation. These programs review and revise the referral mechanisms through which at-risk students come to the attention of service providers. A key aspect of this revision is ensuring that the classroom teacher, who often initiates the referral, is kept abreast of the findings and interventions arising from that referral. The campus committees that review and plan services for at-risk students take advantage of both the better information and enhanced services available from the counselor-social worker teams.

In all instances, the availability of a social worker who gets off of the campus and into the home on a regular basis provides the campus staff with feedback on the need for and effect of campus-initiated interventions. Social workers provide schools with a capacity for needs-based case management far beyond the ad hoc arrangements made possible by over-extended principals, counselors, and teachers. As necessary and appropriate, social workers at most sites incorporate some amount of family therapy into their case management.

The primary guidance and counseling activities of these programs take place on the campus and are generally delivered by the school counselors. Programs differ in terms of how guidance and counseling units are coordinated with the academic curriculum. In some sites, counselors give scheduled presentations during class periods. In other programs, counseling staff coordinate with classroom teachers who incorporate guidance units throughout the academic curriculum. In still other instances, students are pulled from their classrooms to participate in individual or small group counseling sessions. Whatever the site-specific details, these programs provide at-risk students with systematic counseling and guidance on topics ranging from study skills and test-taking through self-esteem and decision-making to survival strategies for coping with family stress.

All programs offer some form of parental education that goes beyond the district's statutory responsibilities to inform parents that their child is considered at-risk and that the district operates a program for such children. Whether in the form of program-staffed seminars, presentations by invited speakers, a formal parent education curriculum, experience-gaining field trips, or individual counseling, these programs reach out to the parents of at-risk students both to both enlist them in the support of their children as well as to help them cope with the stresses they are experiencing.

After-school and/or summer programs operate at each pilot site. Although the ultimate goals of such programs include improved academic performance, they are typically neither academic in character nor credit-earning. Instead, these programs try to improve the motivational and affective bases of school performance by providing experiences designed to enhance self-esteem and self-confidence. While they may also include activities such as tutoring and study skills, these program components take an essentially non-academic route to improving the academic performance of the at-risk child.

Although the share each of the components already discussed, the five programs differ on other substantive features. One extends its affective and self-esteem counseling efforts to include teachers. Two sites make extensive use of incentive-based contracts through which at-risk students are induced to regulate their behavior in the classroom. Another site maintains funds, food, and clothing to meet the unexpected needs of at-risk families. One site trains high school students to act as tutors and mentors for at-risk elementary students while another makes extensive use of social work interns in its case management activities. In some programs, a social worker is assigned to, if not based at, an individual campus while in others the social worker is a member of a student assistance staff that serves several campuses.

Settings

The activities of these programs take place on and off the campus. Guidance and counseling components may be offered in the classroom, in pull-out sessions, and/or in individual meetings in the counselor's office. Activities for parents take place both on campus and in the community. Of course, social workers routinely conduct visits to the homes of at-risk students and, through case management, bring those students and their families into contact with service providers who operate in various settings.

Time Frame

These programs include components that operate within the scheduled school day, before and after classes, on nights and weekends, and during summer months. Program-sponsored summer sessions range from 12 days to eight weeks while case management and service coordination activities continue throughout the summer. (These programs do not require that the at-risk child participate in program-sponsored summer activities in order to benefit from their case management services.)

Resources

The staffs of these programs include both masters-level and certified social workers. Otherwise, the programs utilize personnel and non-personnel resources available to the at-risk program of any district. Of course, these programs may organize such resources in administrative and service structures that may not be a part of the at-risk program of the typical school district.

Evaluation

Implementation

Approximately 2,000 elementary students identified as at-risk received some form of service from these programs during their partial year's operation in FY90. More than half participated in group counseling sessions operated by program staff, over 750 were involved in personalized, individual counseling with program staff, and almost 400 underwent diagnostic assessment arranged through the pilot program. Social workers conducted 478 home visits while 365 counseling sessions were provided to families of at-risk students.

Through such home visits, counseling sessions, and parent meetings, these programs were in contact with over 1250 members of the families of at-risk students. Through the case management provided by program social workers, at-risk students and their families received services from medical clinics, counseling centers, the State Department of Human Services, and family advocacy centers. Although these programs encountered implementation delays comparable to those reported in other pilot program areas, they managed to serve an appreciable number of students and families.

Descriptive accounts provided by program staff as part of the FY90 evaluation touched on a range of effects attributable to these programs. One principal reported a marked reduction in the vandalism of school premises with a concomitant reduction in the cost of maintaining those premises. Multiple reports commented on the reduction in the frequency of disciplinary referrals, suggesting that guidance units in self-esteem and conflict resolution were effective. Program staff were in general agreement that at-risk students and their families were coming to hold a more positive view of school. Even the casual observer noted the enthusiasm of the students participating in the programs' after-school and summer programs, making it reasonable to believe the claims of program providers that such students were, for the first time, actually eager to come to school.

The programs reached even greater numbers of students and families during FY91. Of the 3602 elementary students receiving program services during that year, 63% were provided academic counseling, 36% received group counseling, and 35% had individual counseling sessions. Underscoring the difficulties confronting today's school children, over 20% of these elementary students received crisis counseling via the programs.

A total of 2907 parents received some form of service from these programs during FY91. Virtually all participated in conferences with teachers and program staff. Over 75% received written communications while almost half consulted with staff over the telephone. Small but significant percentages of parents received counseling (22%), home visiting (19%), or social work (17%) services from program staff.

As in their first partial year of operation, these programs served to link students and their families with resources beyond the school. An indication of the programs' continuing effectiveness in this arena was the observation that the number of program families receiving health clinic and medical services nearly tripled during FY91.

The results of the FY91 surveys of teachers, staff, and parents shed interesting light on these programs. Over 90% of teachers and staff responding to the survey reported better coordination of services for students and families, with over half reporting to have met at three times per semester with the school counselor and/or social worker. The majority of these respondents felt that these meetings were worth their time and energy (78%) and that such meetings helped them better assist students confronting situations of risk (68%). More than three-quarters of these respondents felt that the program had helped students have a better school year.

While teachers and staff were uniformly positive in their survey responses, more variety appeared in the survey responses of parents. Almost half of those parents who completed the survey reported that they had met with the program social worker during the year while 65% reported meeting with the school counselor.

While the 79% of parents said that they enjoyed these meetings, parents of students in this pilot program seemed relatively less convinced of the program's benefits than were parents in other types of programs. Sixty percent said that their child had a better year in school because of the program, 66% thought the programs enabled schools and families to work better together, and 70% believed that their child would be more likely to stay in school because of the efforts of the counselor and social worker. While their modal written comments on surveys included praise of the program or for program staff (17%), a substantial portion (11%) of these parents' comments described negative school-family interactions or experiences.

Analyses of FY91 evaluation data for these programs revealed a mixed pattern of findings concerning student outcomes. While among first graders participant students had an attendance rate reliably lower than comparison students, no such difference emerged from analyses of grades two through six. Comparably high percentages of participant and comparison students were promoted at year's end (90% versus 88%) but participant students were more likely to show the less frequent and less desirable outcomes, including being placed at the next grade level (8% versus 4%) and being retained in the current grade (6% versus 1%).

Interpreting this pattern of student outcome results should be tempered by the realization that program staff were liable to have focused resources on those students and families perceived to be least capable of withstanding the stresses confronting them. As a result of this selection bias, students and families not so perceived would be over-represented in comparison groups. Viewed from this perspective, the student outcome results could be interpreted as evidence that the programs reduced the differences that might be anticipated in comparisons between students from groups relatively ill- and well-suited to withstand the stresses challenging today's families.

Cost Surveys

Cost surveys conducted in the summer and fall of 1990 provided estimates of the initial and annual costs of these programs. Estimated non-recurring costs amounted to less than five percent of these programs' aggregate first year expenditures. This relatively low startup cost is largely attributable to the fact that these programs built onto districts' at-risk programs and so could take advantage of existing items such as training arrangements and guidance units.

The estimated per campus annual cost of operating these programs ranges from $11,895 to $61,673, with an average of $30,262. This range reflects program differences in the duration of services (e.g., the least expensive program does not operate a summer program for at-risk students) as well as the number of students served per campus.

Perhaps the best way to characterize the estimated annual cost of these programs is to note that $30,262 per campus closely approximates what it would cost the average public school campus in Texas to hire a full time social worker for 11 months ($30,547). This seems an appropriate comparison, since the core of these programs is the addition of a social worker to the campus.

The distribution of estimated costs across program components shows that some 16% of costs are incurred in planning, training, and/or administrative activities with the balance incurred in the direct delivery of services to at-risk students and their families. Slightly more than half of that balance supports instructional, guidance, and counseling activities that take place on campus while the remainder is incurred in the case management activities through which these programs extend beyond the school setting.

As would be expected of programs primarily involving the addition of staff to the district's at-risk efforts, almost three-quarters of their estimated annual cost is expended on personnel (i.e., salaries and wages) with the balance expended on consumable supplies and materials and contracted services.

Concerns

Some sites encountered difficulties in identifying and then attracting qualified social workers. As a result, the job specifications and salary of the social worker were amended as it became clear that qualified individuals could earn an attractive income practicing outside of public education. In the event, all sites eventually hired qualified staff but the delay complicated the integration of social workers into the campus- and district-level at-risk efforts.

Problems also occurred in coordinating the activities of school staff and social workers. Examples included failure to make available to social workers information on at-risk students' histories and assessment results and case management initiatives emanating from individuals other than social workers. Generally, as these problems resolved, school staff to appreciate the unique capabilities of social workers and social workers to appreciate the perspective of those who had previously been the sole resources for the at-risk student.

Most sites identified better communication with and offerings for parents of at-risk students as priorities. In a similar vein, programs noted the need for better guidelines with which to assess the severity of risk in order to focus limited resources on the most affected families. Several sites called for better record-keeping and service-tracking to more effectively execute their case management efforts.

Finally, all sites noted that communities consisting largely of at-risk families needed time to build trust among the families that make up a neighborhood and between that neighborhood and the school that serves it.

Pilot Elementary At-Risk Program

Program Descriptions

Arlington ISD
Cleburne ISD
Houston ISD
Spring ISD
Ysleta ISD

Pilot Elementary At-Risk Program
Arlington ISD

Program Description

This program operates on two campuses where the social worker-counselor team is augmented by social work interns from the local university. The program operates in conjunction with the district's at-risk programs during the academic year and extends services for at-risk students into the summer.

Instruction

Groups of at-risk students at each campus leave their classrooms at weekly intervals to receive instructional guidance units in self-esteem, peer relations, decision-making skills, career awareness, and responsible citizenship. These units are presented by the social worker and counselor. The district also pays teachers to tutor students before and after school. While available to all students, this tutoring targets at-risk students.

District administrators and teachers staff a half-day summer school of four weeks' duration for low performing at-risk students on each campus.

The social worker and counselor at each campus also conduct evening group meetings for parents during each semester. These meetings provide a venue for teaching parenting skills from the Systematic Training for Effective Parenting program. Representatives of service agencies and organizations are also invited to these meetings to introduce parents to their programs. These meetings are offered during a six week period each fall and spring semester.

Support Activities

A team consisting of the assistant principal, counselor, and social worker identify and review each at-risk student. This review extends beyond the student's school record to other indicators of risk such as abuse. The risk review is supplemented by a screen performed by the counselor to determine whether the counseling needs of the student and the student's family are to be addressed in individual, small group, or conjoint arrangements.

The social worker and social work intern provide case management to at-risk students and their families. Besides coordinating the services of public agencies and community organizations, the program's case management component includes family therapy as needed and appropriate. Social workers and interns consult with parents on child management techniques and education needs during home visits.

Planning, Training, and Administration

The social workers and counselors developed the instructional guidance units used by the program. The summer session's staff planned the thematically organized curriculum in meetings with academic subject area coordinators from the district office.

Social workers attended the Practical Parent Conference while the summer session staff attended an in-service on working with at-risk students. Staff also attend local and regional conferences on topics relevant to the education of at-risk students.

Pilot Elementary At-Risk Program
Cleburne ISD

Program Description

Instruction

School counselors developed and deliver a self-esteem and decision making curriculum to students in their classrooms. The curriculum is presented during the regular six period class day during the fall and spring semesters on each of the five elementary campuses participating in the pilot. The district summer school, a five week session limited to at-risk students, also receives the curriculum. The curriculum is supported by incentives (e.g., bumper stickers, snacks, pencils) as well as field trips.

The program's instructional component for parents - the "Active Parenting Program" - is delivered by counselors and/or principals to groups of parents meeting in schools or homes during both day and evenings. This program takes six weeks to complete and is not offered during the summer.

Support Activities

At-risk students receive guidance and counseling at school from counselors and licensed professional counselors. Counseling occurs in both individual and group settings and emphasizes self-esteem and decision making. Items such as "talking texts," puppets, and toys support the counseling effort by providing a means of communication between counselors and students. The student services advisors coordinate with campus counselors on the service needs of the at-risk students who receive counseling.

Case management services for at-risk students and their families is provided by a social worker and two student services advisors, supported by a school-community liaison. This team works with school counselors, principals, and other staff to identify the service needs of at-risk families and coordinate access to those services. The advisors also insure that feedback on needs status and service delivery gets back to appropriate staff on the student's home campus. Case management continues through the summer and is available to at-risk families whether or not the at-risk students are enrolled in summer school.

Other than contracting with the district for buses to take students on field trips, the program does not provide transportation services.

Planning, Training, and Administration

The counseling staff developed the curriculum on self-esteem and decision making. This curriculum meets the essential elements of the health education curriculum on self-esteem and decision making.

Program staff attend regional workshops and conferences on topics relevant to at-risk programs. One staff member also attended training for the "Active Parenting Program."

Pilot Elementary At-Risk Program
Houston ISD

Program Description

The two social workers acquired for this program coordinate their activities with the school counselors assigned to eight elementary campuses. The expertise and extended services provided by the social workers add a level of intensive support for the most at-risk of the students and families served by the district's program for at-risk elementary students. The social workers operate on 11 month contracts while the counselors have 10 month contracts. Hence, the full array of program services is not available during the summer months.

Instruction

The counselors provide classroom and small group presentations to students on skills such as test-taking, studying, and decision-making. These presentations take place at intervals in the fall and spring semesters during regular school days and are not limited to at-risk students. Counselors also offer parent workshops that include make-n-take activities to promote parents as teachers, field trips, and invited speakers who address topics such as HIV infection and child abuse. These workshops take place during both school and evening hours in the fall and spring semesters. The social workers also conduct workshops for their "target" groups, generally parents in the most at-risk families.

Support Activities

While both counselors and social workers provide individual and group counseling, most of the counseling provided to at-risk students is offered by the counselors. A key facet of this counseling is a "contract" that calls on the student to maintain agreed-upon performance in academics and behavior. Incentives are used to reward the student's observance of this contract. The campus-level counseling includes group activities aimed at enlisting the attention and improving the self-esteem of at-risk students. Examples include the BADD Club - Boys Against Deficiency and Delinquency.

The program's social workers spend the majority of their time in case management. Integrating information from campus-level staff with that obtained during home visits, the social workers identify the needs of and coordinate service referrals for at-risk students and their families. As appropriate and expected, the social worker's case management activity includes a modicum of family therapy and counseling.

Planning, Training, and Administration

The program director, elementary guidance supervisor, counselors, and social workers meet periodically to plan and modify the program. This planning can involve scheduling work, arranging supplies and materials for parent meetings, and organizing campus-level activities.

The program utilizes district-provided programs for staff training.

Pilot Elementary At-Risk Program
Spring ISD

Program Description

This program operates on two campuses at each of which a social worker acquired for the program coordinates with and extends the activities of the campus-level student assistance team. This team, made up of the principal, counselor, nurse, teachers, school secretary, and attendance officer, reviews the academic history and risk status of each at-risk student. This review determines the array of interventions and services planned for the at-risk student. The social workers provide the student assistance team with mobility beyond the campus, conducting home visits that provide critical information on the need for and effects of interventions. The program's counseling and case management services operate fall, spring, and summer while its tutoring activities take place during the spring and summer.

Instruction

The program offers tutoring in language arts and mathematics to help the at-risk student overcome deficiencies and maintain academic progress. Volunteer high school students trained and supervised by elementary school teachers provide after-school tutoring during the spring semester. District teachers provide tutoring during the half-day, eight week summer sessions at each program campus to which all at-risk students are invited. Although the summer tutoring is conducted by certified teachers and focuses on reading, writing, and arithmetic, students receive no credit for attending the summer session. The summer session tutoring is augmented by field trips. All tutoring takes advantage of instructional units and materials developed by the district.

The social workers offer parent seminars on topics drawn from sources such as Systematic Training for Effective Parenting and "How to Talk So Kids Will Listen." These seminars also feature speakers invited to address topics such as service availability, learning disability, and attention deficit disorder. These seminars take place approximately every two weeks during the fall and spring semesters as well as the summer session.

Support Activities

Group counseling sessions operated by social workers augment the counseling activities of the school counselors. These sessions are conducted with students clustered according to need or status (e.g., abused, parent(s) in prison, latchkey, academic underachievement) and focus on support, stress management, and survival skills. Besides acting as tutors, the high school volunteers are mentors and role models for the at-risk students.

The program's social workers provide case management for at-risk students and their families. This activity is needs-dependent and organized around crisis management. As part of their case management, the social workers try to keep program parents informed of the district's parent education and involvement offerings. This case management is coordinated with the student assistance team's assessment of risk and prioritizing of at-risk families.

Planning, Training, and Administration

The district's program director for student services meets with the social workers, counselors, and teachers to plan at-risk services and interventions, including the components of this program. Teachers staffing the summer session meet with the district's directors of student services, mathematics, and language arts to plan the summer tutorials and field trips. The program director, social workers, elementary teachers, and high school staff plan the selection, training, and supervision of the high school students who act as volunteer tutors.

Elementary teachers train the high school students to be tutors. Staff of the summer session attend the district's "Special Experiences Workshop" to help coordinate the field trips with the program's tutorial offerings. Program staff also attend the district's "Teachers as Counselors" in-service.

The social workers are de facto building principals during the eight week summer session.

Pilot Elementary At-Risk Program
Ysleta ISD

Program Description

Instruction

The instructional component of this program includes daily classroom activities integrated into the academic curriculum, morning and peer tutoring, and a student buddy system. Besides group meetings for parents, meetings are also held with and for teachers. Teachers compose a monthly newsletter that is sent to students' homes.

Support Activities

The program's counseling component includes classroom and pull-out sessions that focus on academic and affective issues as well as support groups for teachers and seminars for parents. The program's summer school component utilizes school-based and field trip activities to foster the student's self-esteem.

The program social worker provides case management to at-risk children and their families. This management includes both individual and family counseling as well as service coordination.

Babysitting is offered during program activities for parents.

Transportation is provided to the summer school and for summer school field trips.

Planning, Training, and Administration

Program planning activities include curriculum development and revision, summer school planning, and the revision of campus discipline plans and policies.

Pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Programs

Description

Goals

These programs are intended to insure that students who are pregnant or parenting remain in school to earn the credits required for graduation from high school and to encourage former students who dropped out because of pregnancy or parenthood to return to school and continue their education.

The statute establishing these programs requires each to provide enrollment in academic courses, training in parenting and child development, pre-employment activities, counseling support, child care, transportation, and coordination with agencies and organizations that offer support to pregnant and parenting students.

Participants

These programs enroll male and female students who attend elementary, middle, and/or high schools and attempt to re-enroll school-aged dropouts. These students are parents or are pregnant.

Since these programs are required to provide child care, the list of program participants includes the offspring of students enrolled in the programs.

A subset of these programs also coordinates with pilot Parent Involvement and Parent Education programs to include in their counseling and parent education activities members of the student parent's household.

Components

As noted earlier, each of these programs contains a set of required components, the first of which is the provision of credit-earning academic courses. Most programs meet this requirement by enrolling students in the regularly scheduled courses offered at the students' home campuses. The academic arrangements of other programs enroll students in continuous-progress courses operating at alternative learning centers, augment regular courses on the home campus with credit-earning courses staffed by teachers paid by the programs, operate a schedule-within-a-schedule of regular academic courses staffed by selected teachers, and/or give students the choice between regular courses at the home campus and enrollment at an alternative learning center.

Regardless of its specific academic arrangement, each program involves extensive academic planning, careful placement, and regular reviews to chart and monitor students' progress toward graduation.

Where available, these programs make use of computer-assisted learning facilities for either credit, review, or remediation. A small number of programs offer their students tutoring, program-sponsored study halls, or opportunities to enroll in adult, community, evening, or advanced placement courses. Other programs offer GED preparation for overage, credit-deficient students, most of whom have returned to school after an extended dropout period.

Approximately a third of the programs rely upon the regularly scheduled comprehensive home economics courses offered on the home campus to meet the requirement for instruction in parenting and child development. Another third of the programs arrange for the same courses to be offered at off-campus sites such as an alternative learning center or a child care facility. The remaining third offer some combination of standard and experimental parenting-child development courses outside of the regularly scheduled school day of the home campus. Particularly among those offering experimental courses, these programs supplement their parenting courses with presentations by non-educators (e.g., health-care providers, adult parents, staff of human services, legal, and employment agencies). Some sites also build into their courses relevant field activities such as block appointments to social or health service providers.

In general, these programs meet the pre-employment requirement by using whatever pre-employment, co-operative, vocational, or comparable program operates on the home or alternative campus. Such programs can be extensive, involving a vocational education plan covering all four years of high school and formal coordination between program and prospective employers.

Among programs offering vocational- or employment-related activities specifically for program participants, such activities include employment at the program's child care facility and adoption of program participants by private sector apprentice-mentor organizations. As part of their transportation component, some programs also provide travel for participants to and from work as well as home, child care, and school.

All programs depend upon district-provided counselors to provide some portion of the academic, personal, and crisis counseling needed by pregnant and parenting students. This basic coverage is extended in some programs by counselors or social workers employed to provide counseling and case management exclusively for program participants. An alternative, less formal addition to basic counseling comes in the form of ad hoc counseling from program and non-school personnel, many of whom have counseling or special education backgrounds. Many programs adopt course schedules that bring participating students together on a regular basis for peer support activities. Through these diverse arrangements, students participating in these programs receive counseling support in individual as well as group settings.

Twenty programs operate on- or near-campus child care facilities. Some of these sites can accommodate all offspring of program participants between infancy and three years of age. Those sites whose child care facilities cannot serve all participants' offspring join the 31 remaining sites in contracting for child care in community-based centers or homes. Some programs function as clearinghouses or brokers for child care placement, others negotiate favorable terms for a block of slots at community facilities, and others simply provide vouchers or reimbursement for child care arrangements made by the student parent.

The transportation needs of program participants are met by a combination of scheduled district buses, public transport services, and private transportation. Many programs operate bus services exclusively for program participants. Program-operated or -sponsored transportation services typically convey students and offspring over routes that connect home, school, child care, and work sites. Programs operating in urban settings typically furnish students with vouchers or discount passes for public transit while a program in a rural district reimburses participants on a mileage basis for their private transport.

Coordination of these programs with agencies and organizations that assist student parents generally takes two forms. First, program participants receive assistance as a result of program activities. For example, a program's counseling activity may identify a student's needs, then its case management puts the student in contact with agencies capable of meeting those needs, and its transportation then conveys the student to the locations where services are delivered. The services thus made available to students range from medical and social services to job placement, housing, and legal counsel.

The second form of inter-agency coordination is the inclusion of service agency and community representatives on the advisory councils that oversee these programs. The coordination made possible by such arrangements results in program-sponsored activities such as block appointments for program participants and the delivery of services on campus. This coordination also enables programs to operate as clearinghouses for community-based assistance, both helping to shape that assistance into forms that correspond to the needs of student parents and providing conduits through which that assistance is made available to students. An example is the church-owned housing made available to student parents after the representative of the local ministerial alliance learned of students' emergency housing needs through serving on a program's advisory council.

Settings

These programs operate in numerous settings, including home campuses and alternative campuses, school- and community-based child care facilities, the work sites and homes of student parents and their families, and facilities operated by service agencies and community organizations.

Time Frame

Although some programs offer services only while students are enrolled in classes, most provide services both during and between periods of active enrollment. Hence, a student parent may utilize a program's child care, parenting education, and transportation services while working during the summer as well as while enrolled in school during the regular academic year.

Resources

Substantial resources are required to establish and operate these programs. Program staff can include certified teachers, parent educators, counselors, nurses, social workers, child care providers, and bus drivers. Among non-personnel requirements there may be buses equipped to transport parents, infants, and children; facilities equipped and supplied for child care; and computer-equipped, competency-based learning laboratories. Not surprisingly, the large majority of programs draw on local, state, and federal sources of funding. Voluntary contributions from individuals and organizations are critical resources for these programs. In addition, these programs require cooperation between schools and the numerous organizations and agencies that provide advisory, counseling, medical, case management, transportation, testing, and other critical services.

Evaluation

Implementation

The 26 program sites that operated in FY90 served 1,254 student parents plus 1,088 of their infants and children. With 51 sites operating during FY91, almost 5,000 student parents and over 3,600 of their offspring participated in these programs.

During FY91, the majority of participating students were female (92%); were eligible for free or reduced-price lunches (57%); and were ethnic minorities (45% Hispanic, 33% African American). Nearly a quarter (24%) of these students had dropped out of school before enrolling in the program while almost a third (31%) were in either college preparatory or honors/advanced placement courses. Most of these students were either expecting (29%) or parenting (49%) their first child. Just over half of these students (58%) resided with their parents. Although the grade level of these students ranged from fifth grade through high school, almost 94% were in grades 9 through 12.

As enrolled students, all teen parents participating in these programs took courses to earn academic credit for promotion or graduation. Slightly more than half (55%) also took part in special training sessions not generally available to enrolled students. Such sessions were typically outside of the regular curriculum and/or met outside of regular class hours. These programs provided specialized tutorial instruction to 22% of participating students.

Beyond these instructional activities, the majority of participating students received case management (73%) and/or counseling (82%) services. Forty percent of these student parents also took advantage of special transportation arrangements while a similar percentage received child care services for their children through the program.

These programs were effective in establishing connections between student parents and various services. Nearly seven times more students received work-related training after enrolling in the program while four and a half times more received actual job placements. Among program participants, the number receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) more than doubled; the number receiving assistance from the program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program increased one and one-third; and the number assisted by the Attorney General's office increased 14-fold. Program enrollment doubled the number of student parents attending health clinics and increased by a factor of five the number of pregnant or parenting students receiving shelter assistance.

Of the more than 3,600 children of student parents who received some kind of service through these programs, 88% were under three years of age. Fifty-seven percent received child care and 63% attended health clinics as a result of their parents' participation in these programs.

Averaged across all grade levels, 63% of the students participating in these programs were judged by local standards to be making satisfactory progress in school, compared to 59% of non-parenting contrast students. At the end of the 1990-91 school year, 56% of the students in these programs were promoted or graduated, compared to 52% of contrast students. No reliably differences between participant and contrast students were found on average course grades or standardized achievement tests in reading or mathematics.

While program participants compared favorably with contrast students on indices of academic progress, participating students had reliably lower attendance rates at each grade level from seventh through twelfth. This finding may well have been the basis for the most troubling result to emerge from the 1990-91 evaluation of these programs -

- an annual dropout rate of 14% among participating students, compared to a rate of 4% among contrast students.

As was the case in surveys of both staff and parents, parenting students held strongly positive opinions of the programs. Well in excess of 90% of all respondents thought the programs helped the participants both as students and as parents and believed the programs should continue and spread to other schools and districts.

Asked to identify the reasons why they did or might have to drop out of school, student parents named the need to care for children, the need to work enough to pay for child care, and the attendance problems that arose from trying to meet those needs. These students expressed the near-universal opinion that the provision of child care and transportation were keys to their returning to and remaining in school. However, they (and program staff) continued to identify difficulties in meeting attendance requirements, especially while dealing with ill health during pregnancy or in a child.

Cost Surveys

Cost surveys were completed on 21 of the 26 pilot sites established during FY90. Based upon these surveys, the median annual cost of these programs was $3,114 per student. Annual program costs ranged from a minimum of $1,095 per student to a maximum of $7,398 per student.

Approximately 12% of the students participating in these programs had more than one child: Programs serving relatively high numbers of these multiparous students had higher annual costs per student. Annual cost per student was not systematically related to a program's child care (on- versus off-campus) or instructional (traditional versus alternative setting) arrangement.

On average, 27% of annual program costs were for instruction; 14% were for guidance, counseling, and case management; 29% were for child care; 10% were for transportation; and 10% were for planning, training, and administration.

The distribution of costs among program components differed markedly as a function of programs' child care arrangements. Compared to programs using off-campus child care facilities, programs offering on-campus child care incurred less of their annual costs in instruction (17% versus 34%) and more of those costs in child care (40% versus 21%).

Concerns

Although described as parenting rather than mothering programs, these programs counted relatively few males among their participants. In those instances when continued contact with the infant's father contributes to the teen mother's difficulties, program staff are not inclined to encourage the father's participation. However, programs reported difficulty in enrolling males even when father and mother were in a stable, supportive relationship.

Among the reasons for males' minimal participation in these programs were fear of being assigned child support payments by the courts, attitudinal bias against being involved in the care of infants, and a disinclination to be the first and only male to participate in program activities.

Program staff sensitive to such factors attempted in various ways to make it easier for males to participate. Some sought to make their programs more accessible to males by enlisting male teachers, counselors, and coaches as "recruiters" for student fathers. Others used the one or few males in their program as the nucleus around which other males would slowly form. Programs sought speakers, enlisted mentors, and planned activities specifically for student fathers.

Concerning the programs' required instructional component, sites encountered some problems in enrolling student parents in regularly scheduled classes on the students' home campuses. Such classes are generally structured for students who enroll at the start of the semester, attend class regularly throughout the semester, and receive credit for work done during and at the end of the semester. A pregnancy's timing and complications, as well as the health of the child resulting from that pregnancy, made it difficult for some student parents to earn credit in such classes. Keeping students in those classes (and in school) required flexibility in both the application of attendance rules and the provision of makeup opportunities. Of course, such problems were less frequent where students used competency-based, self-paced opportunities to earn academic credit.

Instructional efforts were in some instances complicated by the statutory requirements surrounding these programs. For instance, many sites interpreted the need to provide instruction in parenting and child development as a requirement for credit-earning courses on those topics. Parenting seniors scheduled to graduate with their class found that to enroll in such courses they would have to drop a class necessary for graduation. As another example, the need to provide pre-employment services was occasionally read as a requirement for enrollment in formal vocational education classes. Such an interpretation made little sense in the case of a student parent scheduled to take a literature, science, or mathematics class in anticipation of attending college. Program staff generally resolved such complications by assigning greater importance to the graduation needs and post-graduation plans of the individual student parent than to the statutory requirements of the program.

Most programs made extensive use of the sequence of parenting and child development courses available in the regular curriculum. However, some found it necessary to supplement or replace those courses with classes more attuned to the needs of students who were rather than someday might become parents. An additional problem with meeting these programs' parenting education requirement arose in providing appropriate classes to student parents attending middle or junior high school campuses where such courses were not offered. These cases were typically resolved by either arranging for some type of parenting instruction to be offered on the students' home campuses or transporting those students to campuses or child care centers where such instruction was normal fare.

The counseling and case management efforts of these programs focused on addressing the needs of student parents in ways that enabled them to function as parents while progressing as students. Attendance was early and regularly identified as a problem that called for a range of solutions. Those solutions included vigilant monitoring of attendance to detect and defuse attendance problems, establishing attendance contracts, scheduling block appointments as parenting class field trips, and insuring that attendance committees were aware of the circumstances surrounding a student parent's absences. Counselors and service providers generally stressed the desirability of avoiding further pregnancies and found the student parent's school problems more than doubled by a repeat pregnancy.

Since adequate child care is a problem of national scale, it was not surprising that these programs encountered various problems in their attempts to arrange care for the offspring of student parents. For those planning on-site child care, these problems included delays in the construction or renovation of facilities as well as a demand for spaces that exceeded the number planned. Programs seeking to place children in community facilities encountered their own difficulties, including locating child care arrangements near students' homes and/or schools and identifying facilities prepared to serve young infants. In settings where programs sought temporary child care coverage while awaiting completion of an on-site facility that would effectively compete with private-sector providers, programs occasionally encountered an understandable lack of cooperation on the part of such providers.

Citing the benefits of on-site child care (e.g., proximity to school activities, opportunities for parenting education, ability to monitor offspring's health and welfare), programs intending to develop on-site facilities stuck to that intention. To do so typically required an ad hoc arrangement for community-based child care that often resulted in slower-than-anticipated growth in program enrollment. (Sites that planned to use community-based child care usually had adequate child care slots.) Relationships with community-based providers were in some instances improved, if not cemented, by arrangements such as guaranteeing that a number of child care slots would be filled by the program at an agreed price, limiting on-site child care to infants while leaving community centers to provide coverage for toddlers and older children, and contracting with community providers to staff and operate on-site child care facilities.

The transportation plans of some sites ran afoul of district interpretation of transport rules that denied student parents and their offspring places on scheduled bus routes. In other instances, a district's transportation service literally went out of its way to accommodate the students and their children. Programs that purchased or operated their own transport learned much about the space and equipment requirements of a parent traveling with an infant -- many such programs soon found it necessary to obtain a second (or third) vehicle. Items such as reflecting roofs, tinted windows, air conditioning, and radios came to be recognized as necessities rather than luxuries in buses intended for the transport of parents and infants. In addition, the advance of summer brought temperatures that convinced programs of the need to design bus routes and schedules to keep travel times to a minimum.

These programs for school-aged parents addressed a difficult situation with activities and services novel for school-based efforts. As the preceding discussion indicates, the problems that these programs encountered were in some instances related to the programs' sheer scale, in others to the types of services that they attempted to provide, and in still others to the academic, familial, and personal needs of parent students.

It should also be noted that these programs operated in settings that were sometimes less than fully supportive of the programs and their goals. Program staff were understandably hesitant to speak of such problems and many sites reported improvements as their programs began to operate. Nonetheless, some of the problems confronting these programs could likely be attributed to members of the community, school board, district administration, and school staff who were at best unenthusiastic about and occasionally openly hostile to the programs.

Pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program

Program Descriptions

Austin ISD
Bastrop ISD
Bryan ISD
Dallas ISD
Del Valle ISD
Ector County ISD
Fort Worth ISD
Frenship ISD
Galveston ISD
Harlandale ISD
Lamar CISD
Lubbock ISD
Liberty ISD
Marble Falls ISD
McAllen ISD
Nacogdoches ISD
San Marcos ISD
Seguin ISD
Terrell ISD
Weslaco ISD
Wichita Falls ISD

Pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program
Austin ISD

Program Description

INSTRUCTION

This program provides parenting students with improved academic skills in reading, writing, mathematics and critical thinking; knowledge and skills in child development, parenting, home and family living, nutrition and individual and family health; employability and occupational information; vocational assessment; availability of non-traditional job opportunities and the educational requirements of jobs in which students are interested. The regular academic program for these students is provided by the staff at the Robbins Secondary School, an alternative campus. A vocational education teacher is also provided and there is a summer instructional component of six weeks' duration.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

The program provides individual and/or group counseling sessions; intervening to reduce or prevent medically unnecessary absences typical of young parents; providing incentives to encourage attendance; improving parenting students' health as well as their babies health through nursing interventions; increasing awareness of the negative effects of drug and alcohol on individual and family health; conducting student parenting support groups; and providing information on available youth employment programs. A nurse is also available to assist with child care and health counseling matters.

CASE MANAGEMENT

The program provides service coordination for parenting students by identifying locally available services for pregnant and parenting teens and working with students to acquire appropriate community and government services.

CHILD CARE

The program provides campus-based infant and toddler child care for offspring of students enrolled in the program. Individuals from the Foster Grandparents Program work with the program, with at least one foster grandparent on duty each day to assist the program coordinator with child care tasks.

TRANSPORTATION

District buses adapted for infants and toddlers bring students and offspring to the program site. Buses also periodically take students to block medical appointments at clinics. No transportation is provided during summer months.

STAFF TRAINING

The program coordinator attends state and regional workshops and conferences.

Pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program
Bastrop ISD

Program Description

INSTRUCTION

Besides their enrollment in academic classes appropriate to grade level and ability, program students also enroll in a Life Skills for Teen Parents and Home Economics sequence as their schedules allow. The day care director uses the center as a demonstration lab and classroom for modeling parent skills. For students unable to enroll in the Teen Parenting class, informal instruction is available during the program's weekly after-school group meetings. Although the course itself is not offered during the summer, the program does offer child development and parenting activities for student parents attending the remedial academic summer school.

Tutoring through regular school sessions is encouraged, with special peer tutoring arranged as needed. Scholarships covering up to 90% of costs are available for students enrolling in driver's education, correspondence courses, or special college credit courses. Special seminars are included during the program's "overnighters".

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

Special counseling for program participants is provided through a certified school counselor. This counseling includes career planning, class scheduling, and personal counseling as needed. Additional contact is made through the weekly support group meetings. Counseling regarding special programs is provided by the JTPA representative on the high school campus. The school nurse and Family Planning representatives also provide counseling to program participants as needed.

The "overnighters" provide a venue for intensive counseling with program students.

CASE MANAGEMENT

Needs assessment is performed by the teacher/coordinator and program counselor. Students are referred to appropriate social service organizations for assistance. The program organizes block appointments for services required by numerous students. In some instances (e.g., WIC, DHS), the block appointments take place in school or at the child care facility. Students are monitored by the coordinator and counselor for effectiveness of the assistance.

CHILD CARE

Child care for program participants is provided from 0745 until 1600 at the WEE BEARS Child Development Center on the high school campus. Care beyond regular hours of operation is provided as needed for events such as driver's education, tutoring, and special meetings. Child care for employed students whose hours extend beyond those of the WEE BEARS can be provided at a local day care center on a contract basis.

The child care center operates during the district summer school (i.e., through the end of June). Further summer operation of the child care center depends on the number of eligible students requiring child care. If three or more students require the service, the center remains open with a reduced staff. With fewer students, the center is closed and the requisite child care is contracted out to local providers.

TRANSPORTATION

If possible, transportation to and from school for both parents and children is provided on regular district bus routes. Infant safety seats are provided. Students using personal transportation may apply for a mileage allowance for a specified number of miles per day of attendance. Students living in town receive an allowance for bus fare on the community bus route. Transportation to work and social services is provided as needed.

PROGRAM PLANNING

The program coordinator is responsible for overall planning of the program activities and delivery of services. The coordinator works with the child development center director, the program counselor, and other appropriate personnel to meet the needs of the students.

STAFF TRAINING

Budgetary allowances have been made for attendance at seminars and other training venues for the coordinator, counselor, child development center director, and center employees. On-site training in first aid and CPR is also provided.

Pilot School-Aged Pregnancy and Parenting Program
Bryan ISD

Program Description

The School Age Parenting Program (Options) and the Parent Education and Involvement Program (PAT) of Bryan ISD work closely together. The Options program participants are pregnant and parenting students enrolled in district schools. The PAT program serves parents, beginning in their third trimester and continuing through their child's sixth year.

INSTRUCTION

Options

All program participants attend a vocational sequence of classes on subjects such as child development, parenting, home and family living, and nutrition. Junior High students are enrolled in classes at their home campus team taught by a vocational teacher and an Options staff member focussing on parenting and prenatal skills. High school students that have delivered their babies attend vocational homemaking classes at the Center for Alternative Programs (CAP), taught by high school home economics teachers. Some students attend Cooperative Education in the high school.

Students who are failing a class are required to attend either twice weekly tutoring sessions at CAP or tutoring with their classroom teachers at their home campus.

The Option's social worker visits the home of all pregnant students and makes follow-up visits to students after their babies are born.

The Alternative Competency Education program works with all dropouts using supervised computer tutorials.

PAT

Four parent educators are required to do monthly home visits with each enrolled family. Teen parents receive at least two visits a month. The curriculum used for the program is based on the National Parents as Teacher's curriculum. Topics include characteristics of intellectual, motor, social, and language development, hearing, use of books, sleep patterns, safety proofing the home, discipline, negativism, toilet training, fears and nightmares, temper tantrums, self-esteem in children, and sibling rivalry.

Each family enrolled in the program has the opportunity to attend monthly group meetings. The purposes of the group meeting are to provide information that will help parents in raising their children and to allow parents to form a support group among themselves that will afford support and guidance in raising children. Topics covered during these meetings include discipline, children's books, stress management, feelings and emotions, nutrition, and self-esteem.

Parent educators perform the Denver Developmental Assessment on participating children at 6, 12, 18, 24, and 36 months. Parent educators also conduct the Zimmerman Preschool Language scale at 2, 3, 4, and 5 years. Screenings are usually done during home visits.

A parent resource center is available to parents enrolled in PAT. Parents can borrow instructional materials from the center twice monthly. These materials include parenting books, age appropriate developmental toys, videos on child development, and brochures on topics of interest to parents.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

Options

Counseling and guidance services are available through an Options staff school counselor who helps students choose classes and monitors their educational progress; an Options staff social worker who informs students about community services and provides crisis counseling; counseling therapists who conduct regular group counseling sessions and individual counseling; and mentors who provide weekly contact with students.

PAT

All of the parent educators provide counseling services as needed.

CASE MANAGEMENT

Options

Case management is provided by the Options staff social worker.

PAT

The PAT staff works closely with health and human service for recruiting and referrals.

CHILD CARE

Options

Child care is provided to program participants through contracts with community providers during the school year, and during the summer for students in summer school or the district's JTPA program. Children's attendance is monitored weekly and centers are monitored monthly.

PAT

Child care is provided to participants during group meetings by volunteer college students and teachers from the district's Head Start program.

TRANSPORTATION

Options

Transportation is provided to program participants to and from school, day care centers, some appointments, and work by a bus purchased with grant funds and equipped with car seats for infants. Some students are provided with local bus cards and program staff members provide emergency transportation.

PAT

Teen parents are provided transportation to their group meetings.

PROGRAM PLANNING

Options

Options staff meet weekly to plan program activities. Staff members also work together to make sure that the program goals and the needs of the students are being met. Each staff member is responsible for planning classes, special program activities, and home visits.

PAT

Each parent educator is responsible for scheduling home visits convenient for both the family and educator. The educator is also responsible for organizing manipulatives and handouts for parents during the home visits. The parent educators coordinate all aspects of the monthly meetings.

STAFF TRAINING

OPTIONS

In-service meetings are held monthly on a variety of topics. Staff members also attend training sessions provided by local community agencies and out of town conferences.

PAT

To be certified, each parent educator is required to annually attend the Parents as Teachers training. During the year, educators also attend conferences and workshops pertaining to parent education.

Pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program
Dallas ISD

Program Description

INSTRUCTION

The New Futures -- Students Taking a New Direction (STAND) Program provides formal classroom presentations by staff and community agencies, daily child development classes at the infant care facility, and remedial tutorial assistance provided by volunteers from community groups and the private sector. Community meetings and presentation help increase community awareness and assist in securing volunteer projects for program participants.

Standard curriculum and vocational programs are provided by the regular resources of the program's host school, South Oak Cliff High School. The pilot also pays summer school tuition for program participants.

Additional individual and group instruction is offered each week through the YWCA Metropolitan Dallas School-Age Mothers and Fathers Program.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

The STAND Program includes vocational guidance, educational and career planning, individual and group counseling, and daily support counseling. Services are offered by a number of internal and external professionals.

Upon entering the program, students complete two computer-based career planning and information assessments that support mature decision making. This service is provided through an area community college. A few students are referred to the Dallas ISD Metropolitan Learning Center for complete assessment before they are sent to their academic counselors. Daily support counseling is offered to monitor students with specific concerns on a daily bases.

Each student also receives a daily visit by a staff member in the infant care facility, in a classroom, or in the STAND Center. Written communications are distributed weekly. Telephone calls are made to homes after hours, and special home visits are made under extenuating circumstances. Volunteers help with this component.

CASE MANAGEMENT

The STAND Program monitors student participation and assists each participant with access to quality community services. Organizations providing services include Child Support Enforcement Division of the Attorney General's Office, Birth and Death Certificates for the city of Dallas, child care providers, information on male concerns, parenting education from the

Juanita Craft Health and Recreation Center, peer counseling, preadolescent education, street counseling for dropout recovery, contract telephone counseling for crisis intervention, youth services through Dallas Area Rapid Transit, and a variety of community and civic groups.

Follow-up services are planned and provided over a 12-week period after the student leaves the program. Students are telephoned after the third, sixth, and ninth weeks. During the phone conversations, students are encouraged to make quality decisions about family planning, work, and continuing education.

CHILD CARE

Services are provided between 7:15 and 4:30 pm each day on site, 12 months a year. The on site child care facility is staffed through a community provider. To partake of this child care service, each program participant must attend school each day, provide current medical documentation, attend child/parenting classes, and volunteer two hours a week in the child care facility, in the program office, or in a community setting. During the summer, the program also places students into one of seven community-based child care centers.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is provided by the Dallas Area Transit System at a student discount rate. Student tickets provide rides without transfer charges. Emergency transportation is provided by program volunteers.

PROGRAM PLANNING

Special programs are designed to meet special needs of program participants. Program participants are included in all extracurricular school organizations and activities as participants and volunteers. Staff members are directed by input from the school board, administrators, and the program's advisory group.

STAFF TRAINING

Program and child care staff are periodically trained via the community collaborative agreement in place with the district, the local community college, and community churches. Professional training for program administrators is provided through professional organizations and community advisory groups. Program staff also provide development for the high school's faculty as well as faculty of the high school's feeder schools.

Pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program
Del Valle ISD

Program Description

INSTRUCTION

An experimental vocational Home Economics course entitled "*Parenting for School-Aged Parents*" is offered to pregnant and parenting students. Those unable to enroll in this course because of schedule conflicts must enroll in another vocational Home Economics course that will improve parenting skills. There is also a summer school component for all academic areas, including parenting.

Program students are also able to participate in the ATLAS program (Alternative Teaching and Learning for All Students). This program is an independent study, self-paced academic program designed for students who have left the educational community but wish to pursue a high school diploma rather than a G.E.D. This competency-based program has an honors-level curriculum and is open-entry, open-exit. ATLAS is offered during regular or evening classes. Although primarily a dropout recovery program, ATLAS is available to program students who meet the eligibility criteria.

After school (4-5 pm) computer tutorials are offered in the program's classroom. Computer software is used for self-guided tutoring, with assistance from the coordinator and clerical aide.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

A specific school counselor does all of the annual course scheduling for the pregnant and parenting students. During each school year, the coordinator and counselor meet jointly with each student to create, adjust, and/or update the student's individual education and career plan or *IECP*. Personal counseling is also provided by the school counselor.

Informal support groups are scheduled twice a month during enrichment (homeroom) period. During this time, various speakers present information on child support and custody, parenting skills, trade/technical schools, colleges, family planning, and self-esteem.

A crisis counselor from Middle Earth is on staff at the high school to serve all students in need of counseling.

CASE MANAGEMENT

The program coordinator and clerical aide counsel program students on a daily basis concerning immediate service needs. The assistant principal and the computer lab instructional aide play similar roles for students in attendance at the ATLAS facility.
Community social workers, nurses and doctors (including Ceden Family Resource Center, South Rural Community Clinic, Montopolis Clinic, Child and Family Service, Child, Inc., and Teenage Parent Council) also provide case management and service coordination for program students.

Child and Family Service, Teenage Parenting Council, Child, Inc., and Seton East Hospital also serve students with individual case management. Legal Aid of Austin provides students with legal advice.

The program's clerical aide is responsible for relaying information concerning service coordination between case workers and students enrolled in the program.

CHILD CARE

An on-campus facility provides child care for program students.

TRANSPORTATION

School buses serve teen parents and children with daily door-to-door transportation from home to the child care center and school campus. Each bus has a separate schedule route and a contracted school bus driver along with seat belts, car seats, and booster seats.

These buses also transport students to appointments and work sites on individual trips which vary by dates and times.

PROGRAM PLANNING

The coordinator's planning activities include writing curriculum and scheduling field trips, bus routes, and client appointments. The coordinator meets with area professionals in health and human services to learn correct procedures and information to match services with students.

STAFF TRAINING

The coordinator and child care staff attend workshops on social and health services, conducting support groups, teen health concerns, teen programs' media projection, computer training, and child care services implementation seminars.

Pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program
Ector County ISD

Program Description

INSTRUCTION

This program operates at the district's alternative campus for high school students. The campus instructional program is open entry/exit and self-paced and provides credit-on-mastery. Students enrolled at this alternative campus cannot co-enroll at the adjoining high school.

Students generally attend school for half of a day, although full day attendance is an option. The program is year round and operates five days a week.

The instructional program relies on ad hoc one-on-one or small group tutoring from certified teachers complemented by computer-assisted instruction. The computer-assisted portion of the instructional component is essentially a GED preparation course that is used for remediation. The more traditional instructional materials are organized in course-specific packets integrated with state curricula and textbooks. A student must be working on four packets at any given time.

Program students enroll in a child development and family living course derived from the home economics curriculum. Like all other courses on this campus, this course is self-paced. However, it does include guest speakers and observations of infants and children at the day care facility that is housed on the alternative campus. The topics covered win this course are coordinated with issues discussed in counseling activities.

COUNSELING

School counselors work with students on academic and non-academic issues. The program director works in concert with the counselors to develop and monitor the student's IECP.

Each professional member of the campus staff is assigned an "advisory group" of five to 10 students. This group meets daily to discuss topics varying from life style concerns to parenting issues to school performance.

CASE MANAGEMENT

A campus-based case worker certified in Parents-as-Teachers conducts needs assessments of program students. The case worker meets with students both on campus and in students' homes. Depending upon the student's needs, the case worker is involved in the coordination of nutritional, medical, financial, and social services. While such services are provided off-campus, the program students attend block appointments.

CHILD CARE

Child care is provided on site. This service operates in half-day sessions from 0745 to 1600 while parents attend class. Whole day care is provided on an as available basis if the parent is attending class both morning and afternoon. Depending upon income level, food for children is either provided under the free and reduced price lunch program or by the parent. The child care facility accommodates infants and toddlers.

TRANSPORT

Students requiring transport are bussed to and from the alternative campus on district vehicles. A program van is available for transport to and from community agencies as well as places of employment. All vehicles have two-way radios and accommodate the offspring of program participants.

PROGRAM PLANNING

The program and child care directors plan enrichment activities such as field trips and work with community agencies to plan the delivery of social and other services to program students.

STAFF TRAINING

Both the program and the child care director provide training to the staff of the campus child care facility. Program staff also attend local and regional conferences on relevant topics.

Pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program
Fort Worth ISD

Program Description

INSTRUCTION

While program participants attend one of thirteen home campuses during the regular school year, they receive summer school instruction at the New Lives School. Summer school tuition and teacher salaries are paid through pilot funds. The district's Evening High School is available year round, with a portion of five teachers' salaries paid by the pilot to ensure pilot students' attendance. The Adult Education Center hosts the Evening High School and offers both regular courses and GED preparation. The program's social workers also instruct students individually and in groups regarding parenting, child care issues, child development, and family planning. Instruction may occur at the day care center, during home visits, and in school settings. The program's vocational counselor provides adult education through computer-assisted instruction with career related software. Video equipment and teaching materials also aid instruction. Guest speakers donate time to make presentations to student groups on topics such as "Tips for Job Interview" and "Appropriate Behavior for Toddlers".

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

Program staff provide direct individual and group counseling to participants. Counseling consists of crisis intervention, decision making, emotional support, and enhancing self-esteem. The program's vocational counselor gives guidance in career decisions and job training programs.

CASE MANAGEMENT

Social workers conduct needs assessment of all students upon entrance to the program. Students are referred to appropriate agencies and community providers and are then tracked to ensure that available services are being utilized. Child care and transportation needs are also assessed. Joint case management is conducted with school personnel, health providers, and other agency social workers. Students are also tracked for one year after exiting the program.

CHILD CARE

Child care services for the offspring of participants are contracted with the Day Care Association of Fort Worth and the S.W. Richardson Child Care Center. Both providers have infant/toddler stimulation as a program component. Students can use child care at any of these centers when they attend regular school or during the evening when enrolled in evening high school or the GED program at the Adult Education Center. Any student requesting child care at a child care center not contracted at the current $55 a week rate must pay any fee over that amount. Students using the Polytechnic High School Child Care Center pay a fee of $10 a week for one child and $15 a week for 2 children. A Community Development Block Grant supplements the child care for any student living in the Diamond Hill area by paying $20 a week for each child enrolled.

TRANSPORTATION

Students needing transportation to attend school, a clinic appointment, or the child care center are provided bus tokens. The Wheels program of the American Red Cross also provides transportation from school to medical or agency appointments and back to school for any program participant. To assist students in safely transporting their children, the program provides them with infant/toddler car seats when needed. Regular district buses also accommodate the parents and children participating in the pilot.

PROGRAM PLANNING

Program planning is conducted by the Project Director. Responsibilities include planning the program calendar and arranging speakers

STAFF TRAINING

Staff development includes attendance at TEA and TACSAP conferences as well as any seminar or workshop whose topic relates to teens. Program staff attend workshops offered by adolescent psychiatric clinics on topics such as substance abuse, teen sexuality, and cultural diversity. Presentations by agency representatives keep program staff informed of social service eligibility requirements and available community resources.

Pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program
Frenship ISD

Program Description

INSTRUCTION

The academic core of the REACH program is a set of 21 classes whose curricula cover the basic skills and home economics. These classes are offered during an expanded seven period day and REACH students use them to augment the high school's regular offerings. The program's advanced child development and parenting classes feature regular presentations on perinatal care and nutrition by professionals from the School of Nursing and the Department of Home Economics at nearby Texas Tech. Field trips complement course work. Additional instructional support is available in the form of a computer-assisted GED class that offers students self-paced learning opportunities in mathematics and language arts as well as a job skills program. Students can also take advantage of faculty-staffed tutorials during the daily activity period and after school on two days a week. REACH staff also conduct home visits to provide homebound courses for students who for medical reasons cannot remain on the campus throughout their pregnancy. Students can make up lost credit by attending the district's summer school and can earn advanced credit through co-enrollment at Texas Tech.

COUNSELING

The program complements the academic testing and planning of the school counselor and the health counseling of the school nurse with group counseling offered by MHMR personnel, occupational counseling from JTPA staff, individual counseling by a volunteer psychiatric social worker, and self-esteem and motivational counseling from a contract professional. The advanced child development and parenting class provides a further opportunity for group counseling and support.

CASE MANAGEMENT

While the program does not engage in formal case management activities, its staff do act as ad hoc case managers who enable students to utilize services such as those available from agencies such as county and state health departments and the attorney general's office.

CHILD CARE

Child care is available daily from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at a licensed day care center in the community. This coverage is available to both the children of full time students and those of students who work while attending school. During the summer, child care is available only to enrolled students. The provision of child care includes not only care but also formula, food, and diapers.

TRANSPORT

The program contracts with a bus company to transport students and children between home, school, child care, and work. Besides this scheduled route service, the program also contracts transport for field visits that support the instructional component.

PROGRAM PLANNING

The program director coordinates with the school counselor in establishing students' graduation plans and creates the academic courses required by those plans. The 17 teachers who provide REACH's 21 classes conduct a three day planning workshop each summer. These teachers and the program director work together in planning field trips and arranging for program presenters.

STAFF TRAINING

The program provided computer training for the aide who staffs the computer lab.

Pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program
Galveston ISD

Program Description

INSTRUCTION

This program's instructional component includes a parenting class that focuses on child development, parenting, nutrition, home management, budgeting, and three generation living. Students are also enrolled in the Parent as Teachers (PAT) component where a specific group meets once a week. This program provides teen parents with training and support services that enable them to enhance their child's intellectual, language, physical, and social development. The parenting class and PAT operate during the school year and the summer. The program also pays tuition for students that take summer school. The students also participate in field trips that are related to parenting skills and issues.

Tutoring is provided for students who are having problems with their academic courses. The tutoring services are arranged by the social worker of the program with the student's teacher for the class in which the student needs tutorial assistance.

Day care centers provide instruction on which toys are appropriate for the children and how to use them properly.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

School counselors counsel students regarding their academic courses. The program's nurse coordinator provides individual and group counseling.

CASE MANAGEMENT

The program's nurse coordinator provides case management for each student enrolled in the program, ensuring that the student receives services through the Department of Human Services, prenatal care at a health care facility within the community, assistance through WIC program, and other community service. The nurse coordinator also makes home visits to students.

CHILD CARE

Child care services are contracted through local day care centers.

TRANSPORTATION

The program contracts with the district to provide daily transportation for students to and from school and day care centers. Weekly transportation is also provided to PAT meetings.

PROGRAM PLANNING

During the school year guest speakers are asked to come in to discuss various topics with the students. The nurse coordinator plans activities for students to attend all summer. All activities are planned around regular summer school.

STAFF TRAINING

All staff members receive training throughout on issues regarding teen pregnancy and methods useful in working with teen parents (e.g., group dynamics, families in crisis, and working with abused teens).

Pilot School-Aged Pregnancy and Parenting Program
Harlandale ISD

Program Description

INSTRUCTION

Parenting education is offered daily to middle school students, twice daily for high school parents, and two times per week to parents in the evening program. In addition, a one-half credit summer course is offered to students who have taken a course during the year. Computer-based tutoring emphasizing TAAS remediation is offered three times per week. CVAE-COOP training is available to parents who work during the day. Competency-based academic instruction is offered in the Evening High School, with tuition paid by the program.

Incentives are provided at the end of each six week grading period for students with no unexcused absences and no failures.

The program sponsors weekly workshops involving volunteers from community agencies are held to discuss a variety of issues. Students take monthly educational field trips to community agencies such as the Women's Center and local hospitals. Issues such as responsible sexuality, parenting, and child care are discussed during home visits and one-on-one tutoring by nursing students.

The program offers grandparent workshops for the parents of program participants.

A lending library of developmentally appropriate toys, story books, parenting materials, and equipment such as car seats is available to program participants.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

The Guidance and Counseling component of the program includes weekly mentoring sessions with school counselors and professional staff to review each student's grades, attendance, and service needs; conferences with parent, student, project director, and staff to develop a probationary contract for students with attendance or grade problems; weekly group or individual counseling sessions conducted by contracted counselors from the student's campus; and group sessions conducted by volunteers from community agencies for participants and their partners.

CASE MANAGEMENT

The program's social conducts needs assessment and provides ongoing case management services. In conjunction with nursing students, the social worker maintains medical histories on participating students and their children. Medical, dental, and social services are available at the program site. The program schedules and provides transportation to block WIC appointments two to three times per month. Program staff coordinate schedules for services for students attending one of the eight secondary campuses. The program also maintains emergency supplies of formula and baby clothes. The program attempts to secure continued services for a participant who moves out of the school district by identifying a contact person in new district. Case management includes follow up with students who have left the program

CHILD CARE

Child care is provided through reimbursements to program participants for care in licensed child care facilities. This care is provided during the day or evening for and during the summer for those who attend summer school, work, or participate in a job training program.

TRANSPORTATION

The program operates two buses that provide transportation to and from school, child care facilities, and community agencies. Two driver/instructional aides coordinate transportation services, accompany students to agencies, and assist with tutoring. This service is available throughout the year. The program reimburses students who use private transportation to and from work, school, child care, and community agencies. Reimbursement or bus tickets are available for students who use public transportation. Vouchers are available on an emergency basis to cover the costs of taxi services.

PROGRAM PLANNING

The vocational homemaking teacher, in conjunction with case managers and counselors, sets the schedule for field trips and plans the sequence and schedule for program workshops. The case manager, in conjunction with the vocational homemaking teacher and driver/aides, plans the schedule for social services and makes appointments. School counselors, in conjunction with program staff, plan the schedule for counseling, mentoring, and tutoring. The CVAE teacher schedules on-site job visits. The program secretary, under the direction of the professional staff, coordinates data collection, maintains updated grade and attendance information, transportation routes, and payroll reports.

STAFF TRAINING

The program director provides orientation and refresher sessions to program staff and arranges for appropriate staff development. The vocational homemaking teacher and the case manager attend Practical Parent Education training and all follow-up sessions. Professional staff attend workshops and conferences on topics relevant to teen parenting.

Pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program
Lamar CISD

Program Description

Students participating in this program are enrolled at various sites, including two high schools, two junior high schools, two sixth grade centers, the district guidance center, homebound, and special sites (e.g., state school, DHS shelter for abused mates, juvenile detention center, residential hospital). The full program operates fall and spring semesters, with tuition scholarships and child care available for students opting to enroll in summer school.

INSTRUCTION

Students in the program have access to the range of credit and non-credit courses available in the different campuses where they are enrolled. Vocational preparation is provided through regular, CVAE, and VEH coursework.

Instruction in child development, parenting, and family living is provided in a number of settings. Students earn credit through an experimental, district-designed Home Economics course entitled "Parenting for School Age Parents." This course includes both field trips to sites of interest to parents (e.g., hospital delivery rooms and nurseries; community day care sites) and presentations by invited speakers. Students may also enroll in the relevant Voc Ed and CVAE regular courses such as Individual/Family Life and Food Production, Management, and Services. Finally, students at the district's high schools participate in a non-credit "Lunch Bunch" that meets during lunch and activity periods to hear presentations by invited speakers and discuss issues of interest to student parents.

COUNSELING

Various counseling and guidance services are available to students participating in this program. The program's teacher/coordinator provides counseling in family, group, and individual settings to address students' personal, emotional, and social concerns. Campus vocational counselors operate individual and group sessions on self-help, educational, and career topics. Students attending the high school at which a PALS program operates receive peer counseling through that program. Counseling needs more individualized or specialized can be meet through use of the district's social worker, the Women's Center social worker, community agencies, or private counselors.

CASE MANAGEMENT

The program provides case management, coordination, and transportation services that enable students to utilize local and state providers of health, legal, and other services.

CHILD CARE

Financial assistance is available for child care during the time that the student parent attends school or works at a school-related job. Student parents may choose among three district-approved child care facilities. Summer school attendees are also provided child care.

TRANSPORT

Besides the regular district routes for students living two or more miles from campus, a program-sponsored bus equipped with approved child safety seats transports students and their children between home, day care, and campus. The program also provides weekly transportation for parents and children to attend health and WIC appointments.

PROGRAM PLANNING

The program teacher/coordinator meets regularly with the district's special program and vocational directors to assess the program. The program is evaluated and revised annually.

STAFF TRAINING

The program teacher/coordinator attends conferences on issues relevant to teen parent programs.

Pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program
Lubbock ISD

Program Description

INSTRUCTION

Students participating in this program receive academic instruction from the district's alternative campus during their pregnancy and from the home high school and junior high school campuses after the baby is born. The high school operates a six period day, with a 0 hour available at the student's option. Program students come together daily in home room to hear topical presentations relevant to parenting and child development. These presentations are routinely supplemented by handouts In addition to classroom offerings, teachers compensated by the program offer after-school tutoring to program participants and the program nurse provides extensive health care instruction during home visits. Students may also attend district summer school on the home high school campus.

COUNSELING

The program director and counselor interview prospective participants before admission to the program. This initial counseling is followed by in-depth sessions by program staff and volunteer professionals during the school year. The program counselor holds brief daily sessions with participants, organizes group sessions, and facilitates the peer support group. The program's counseling activities can extend to include members of the student's family, especially during home visits conducted by the program's director, counselor, and nurse. The program counselor also coordinates with the school counselor in developing an IECP for each program participant.

CASE MANAGEMENT

The program director, counselor, and nurse function as a case management team through which participants obtain social, shelter, family, legal, and child care services. The program's case management also involves tracking school drop-outs in an effort to bring them back into school via the program.

CHILD CARE

The program contracts child care with Early Learning Centers, a United Way sponsored operation with five facilities. This child care operates from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and is available during the summer. The program nurse conducts supervisory visits to each child care facility. Child care fees are paid by the program only when a student does not qualify for such fees under AFDC.

TRANSPORT

The district carrier is contracted to operate bus service for program participants. Two routes operate each morning and afternoon while "field trips" operate during the day. This combination of scheduled routes and special trips provides participants transportation between home, child care, school, work, and appointments.

PROGRAM PLANNING

The program director, counselor, and nurse plan and coordinate the delivery of program services. These activities include field trips during the school year and a spring outing for students and their babies. The staff's program planning also includes regular meetings with the program's advisory committee and representatives of community and service agencies as well as follow-up contacts with graduates of the program.

STAFF TRAINING

Program staff attend local workshops on topics relevant to teen parenting, regional and state conferences of interest to program providers, and TEA technical assistance meetings.

Pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program
Liberty ISD

Program Description

Students participating in this program attend school at the campus housing the district's high school (9-12) and middle school (6-8). The program operates year-round, with tuition scholarships, computer-assisted instruction, and child care available for students opting to enroll in summer school.

INSTRUCTION

Students in the program have access to the range of credit and non-credit courses available to all district students. Participants are encouraged to use their vocational course selection to take Parenting and Child Development and Home and Family Living, each taught by regular district homemaking staff. Having completed these courses, students are encouraged to take other vocational courses that provide training in various occupational fields.

The program's instructional component is augmented by invited speakers who make presentations during the homemaking classes or in FHA- or HERO-sponsored seminars held after school. These speakers, including local doctors, UTMB personnel, and the county extension agent, address topics such as prenatal and postnatal care, child development, nutrition, and wellness.

Students may take tutorials in the computer lab during or after school. The lab's software covers the core curriculum, TAAS remediation, and SAT preparation.

COUNSELING

Counseling is a combined effort on the part of the school counselor (academic, vocational, and personal matters), the program director (vocational and placement options), and the school nurse (prenatal and postnatal care and immunization). Students meet with the school counselor and the program director in individual and group settings to address program matters extending from child care to SAT preparation.

CASE MANAGEMENT

The school counselor and program director collaborate on a needs assessment of each student entering the program. Appropriate contact are then made on the student's behalf with state and community services providers such as the public health clinic and WIC. Additional or non-local services are coordinate by counselor and/or director. Periodic meetings are held between director and student to review needs and make appropriate adjustments to the student's plan for services. These meetings take place monthly during the summer.

CHILD CARE

The district contracts with a local center to provide child care daily from 6:00 am to 6:30 pm. Some program students use this child care during regular school hours. They and others in the program also use the service to provide coverage during activities (e.g., club meetings, practices, appointments) that take place after school hours. Child care during the summer months is provided only for students who elect to attend summer school.

TRANSPORT

Regular district transport routes are available to program students and their children. The program provides child seats for use both on district buses and in private cars. Although buses and child seats are available, many student parents elect to self-transport their children to the day care center.

The program and district operate a bus for students attending the after school tutorial. Program students have access to a county-operated van for prenatal appointments that are only available out of town.

PROGRAM PLANNING

The program director and school counselor work with homemaking teachers to schedule parenting seminars, invited speakers, and field trips for program students. The program director also holds campus-wide meetings to discuss the program with teachers. The program director gathers information from the school counselor and faculty on what is working, what is not working, and what is needed. These data are used to identify needed resources and plan for costs.

STAFF TRAINING

The homemaking teachers attend workshops on the needs of pregnant and parenting students while the program director and school counselor attend regional and state meetings relevant to the operation of parenting programs.

Pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program
Marble Falls ISD

Program Description

This program operates during the fall and spring semesters at the district's high school campus. No program activities are planned during the summer -- most participating students are employed by the Private Industry Council.

INSTRUCTION

Students participating in this program receive their core academic courses through the high school's regularly scheduled classes. These students also enroll in a parenting and child development class during seventh period. This class, part of the Home Economics curriculum, is taught by the program director and includes guest speakers (e.g., school counselor, crisis center counselor, child care professionals) addressing topics of concern to student parents (e.g., child development, substance abuse, discipline). Topics discussed in this class are complemented by field trips. Program students are also required to remain after school for 30 minutes tutoring and 30 minutes studying.

COUNSELING

This program has no formal counseling component, relying instead on school counselors at the high school campus.

CASE MANAGEMENT

The program director's case management activities include an informal needs assessment as well as coordination of appointments for student parents at WIC, TDH, and DHS.

CHILD CARE

Child care for the offspring of student parents is provided in private facilities contracted by the program. A child care aide from the program who will work in the program's own child care facility is employed in one of the contract facilities. A program-provided bus transports the children between their homes and the child care facilities.

(The program will eventually operate an on-campus child care facility that will be staffed by district personnel (i.e., the program director and two child-care workers). This facility will accommodate 18 infants and 15 toddlers.)

TRANSPORT

A private firm contracted by the program provides daily bus service between students' homes, child care facilities, and school.

PROGRAM PLANNING

The program director plans the lessons, speakers, and trips of the parenting class.

STAFF TRAINING

The program director attends workshops on issues relevant to pregnancy and parenting among students.

Pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program
McAllen ISD

Program Description

PROGRAM SETTING

This program operates out of a temporary facility housing classrooms, computer labs, health examination suites, and administrative offices. Students attending the center come from two high schools, five junior highs, and a campus attended by all district ninth graders. While primarily an alternative campus arrangement, the program offers participants the option of attending school on their home campuses.

The program operates for 11 months each year.

INSTRUCTION

The instruction offered at the program's center includes a secondary curriculum in English, mathematics, science, and social studies. These classes are provided in small group, individual, and computer-assisted formats. Field trips extend and complement the program's instructional efforts.

The parenting and child development component includes perinatal care, nutrition, baby care basics, parenting skills, and money management. This component has an "outreach" feature in that parenting skills can be confirmed during Saturday home visits. Students attending their home campuses receive parenting and child development through the Home Economics curriculum.

Vocational classes and job readiness training are also available to program students. The vocational classes include a computer-based, credit earning course.

The program's parenting and vocational instructional components are augmented by Saturday seminars and hands-on parenting skills activities.

COUNSELING

Two teachers with counseling certification, a social worker, and a registered nurse provide counseling at the program's central location on an as-needed basis. Individual and group counseling services are contracted through a licensed professional counselor. Students on home campuses utilize the services of campus school and vocational counselors.

Volunteer mentors advise program participants concerning personal, parenting, and career issues.

CASE MANAGEMENT

Needs assessment is performed upon each student's entry to the program. The social worker then coordinates services to meet those needs. In some instances service providers come to the program site and in other instances program students attend block appointments at the agency providing service. Students attending home campuses travel to either the service agency or the program site to obtain services.

CHILD CARE

In awaiting the establishment of its own child care facility, the program contracts with community providers to obtain child care for all student parents in the district. Child care is available year round on weekdays, with the contract providers normally furnishing transportation services.

Program participants are charged a nominal fee for child care.

Upon opening its child care facility, the program will provide child care for children up to 18 months of age and contract for child care for older children.

TRANSPORT

Transportation between home, school, and child care is contracted through the district and child care providers. This transportation is available fall, spring, and summer.

As needed, the program social worker also transports program participants to service appointments and job interviews.

PROGRAM PLANNING

The program's director sets the schedules for field trips and selects Saturday seminar topics.

STAFF TRAINING

Program staff are encouraged to attend professional meetings and conferences on issues relevant to teenage parenting.

Pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program
Nacogdoches ISD

Program Description

INSTRUCTION

This program's instructional component includes an experimental vocational home economics course in School Parenting Education. The course is offered during the regular school year. The Teen-Age Parent Council of Nacogdoches provides weekly meetings for program participants on a variety of topics. The program pays summer school tuition for students who need to make up academic credit as well as the cost of books and tuition for students who participate in the concurrent program at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA).

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

SFA Nursing School students provide home health counseling to participating students. Crisis counseling and home visits are provided by the program director. The program's at-risk counselor helps students complete their four year plans and other academic needs. Support services are also offered by the Big Brother/Big Sisters Program of SFA.

CASE MANAGEMENT

With the assistance of school counselors, the program supervisor provides case management for students. A monthly field trip is scheduled for WIC appointments and a representative from the UT Medical School - Galveston provides weekly services.

CHILD CARE

Child care is provided on-campus. This center e facility serves as a laboratory for parenting and child development courses.

TRANSPORTATION

The program contracts with a private concern to provide a bus for the transportation of parents and their children to and from child care centers, school, and home. Transportation is also provided for field trips and to transport parents to community health services.

PROGRAM PLANNING

The program supervisor sets the schedule for field trips and, in conjunction with the at-risk counselor and nurse, schedules students for services.

Pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program
San Marcos ISD

Program Description

INSTRUCTION

The program's instructional component includes the Teen Parenting Class for the regular high school pregnant and parenting students. It is taught during the first class period by the program coordinator who is a certified Vocational Home Economics teacher. Students are also enrolled in classes that teach marketable job skills or will prepare them for their employment goals.

Sequential courses in Child Development, Foods and Nutrition and Individual and Family Living are taught at the Pride Center alternative school by the Homemaking Teacher/Day Care Director. Students are enrolled in either the morning classes or afternoon classes, and vocational classes are offered at the area vocational school on an adjoining campus. Summer school is offered at both schools.

Speakers are brought in on a monthly basis.

High school tutorials are held daily for thirty minutes after school, before the buses run. A Saturday school is held to make up missed class time. Tutoring is coordinated by the JTPA Youth Coordinator at the Pride Center. Community and Southwest Texas State University student volunteers also assist.

The coordinator, case manager and homemaking teacher also conduct individual tutoring sessions.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

The program coordinator and case manager (a qualified social worker) go on home visits to encourage attendance, check on health and other needs, recruit dropouts, and assist the school-age pregnant and parenting students in any way that will help them stay in school.

Support groups meet at the Pride Center. These meeting are facilitated by the alternative school counselor. Another support group is conducted at the high school by the case manager and coordinator. Regular counseling services are available at the high school. Counseling is also available at the Women's Crisis Pregnancy Center and the Rape Crisis Center.

Program participants go on an annual camping trip at which informal counseling sessions as well as traditional camping activities occur.

CASE MANAGEMENT

WIC comes on campus for their monthly appointments. The appointments are held during the Teen Parenting class. The coordinator and the case manager help students arrange appointments at the health department or doctor's office. The case manager helps the students sign up for Medicaid and other social services. The Women's Center, Southside Community Center shelter, Food Bank, Junior League Clothing store and any other community service organization or agency connected with the school-age parenting program are represented or have input on the program's advisory board.

Telephone legal assistance as well as some college counseling for the college bound school-age parent are also available to program participants.

The coordinator also directs program participants with access to support services of child care, transportation and help in obtaining support services.

CHILD CARE

On-campus child care is available at no charge during school hours, for accredited work training or jobs, during summer school, and for the children of students employed in credit earning jobs.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation for both parents and children is provided. A school bus provided by the grant and operating for student parents and their children is maintained by the district.

PROGRAM PLANNING

The program coordinator plans and directs the School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting program. She is the "linking pin" with the community.

STAFF TRAINING

The program coordinator attends meetings such as the Texas Association Concerned with School-Age Pregnancy, Texas Vocational Home Economics Teachers State Conference, Single Parents/Homemakers state meetings, The Governors Conference on Child Abuse Prevention, and other meetings dealing with Teenage Pregnancy. The staff receive Red Cross First Aid and CPR training.

Pilot School Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program
Seguin ISD

Program Description

INSTRUCTION

The program's instructional component includes one organized parenting class per school day. Students unable to schedule this class take other home economics classes. Students also receive a developmental learning program for infants and toddlers.

Peer tutoring and remedial instruction by campus teachers are available to program participants. Eligible students are enrolled in the district's Strategies with Technology for At-Risk Students (STARS) Program . This program hastens graduation by doubling up on math and English classes. The program also utilizes the homebound teachers.

The program pays tuition for students to take summer school classes and drivers education.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

Program staff coordinate their counseling efforts with academic counselors, homebound teachers, the district's at-risk counselor, and the school nurse. The program director provides crisis counseling as needed and follows up with calls and visits to students' homes.

CASE MANAGEMENT

Monthly field trips are scheduled to WIC, DHS, and the Health Department. The county hospital's social workers also work with program participants.

CHILD CARE

Child care is provided on-site during the school day and after school until 6:30 for working students. Babysitting is also provided during workshops.

TRANSPORTATION

The program operates a bus that transports students and their children to and from school, childcare, and appointments with service providers.

PROGRAM PLANNING

The program director sets schedules for all activities and plans workshops, field trips, tutorials, and appointments with service providers.

STAFF TRAINING

The program director attends local, state, and national meetings pertaining to pregnancy and parenting among students. The director also attends workshops on the effective operation of child care facilities.

Pilot School Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program
Terrell ISD

Program Description

INSTRUCTION

This program augments the district's instructional offerings in a number of ways. A certified teacher staffs the classroom of the program's Student Assistance Center (SAC), providing remedial and tutorial support for program participants. The classroom also provides a space where students can complete homework and makeup assignments. The program uses the Parents as Teachers (PAT) model to provide participants with information on child development and parenting topics. The PAT curriculum is delivered both at home and in the program's day care facility. Additional presentations by program staff, contracted professionals, and members of the community focus on health care topics such as nutrition, prenatal and pediatric care, and drug and sex education. The program supports students' summer academics by contributing to the pay of a summer school teacher. A loan library containing both literature and toys supports the program's instructional activities.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

The program complements the academic and vocational advising provided by school counselors with family systems counseling for student parents and parents of student parents. This counseling occurs in individual, family, and support group settings.

CASE MANAGEMENT

The program's case management activities enable students and their family members to obtain access to public agencies, community groups, and health care providers.

CHILD CARE

Program participants use child care both on campus and in the community. The on-campus facility is staffed by program personnel and is within the building that houses the SAC and program offices. The child care center operates during program activities outside of school hours as well as during the school day.

TRANSPORTATION

Two school buses operated by the program provide children and their student parents with daily door-to-door transportation from home to the on campus child care center. These vehicles also transport students and children to other program activities and appointments both at and away from the program site.

PROGRAM PLANNING

Program staff are involved in various planning activities including coordination with classroom teachers to review students' academic needs, organizing prenatal and child development classes, PAT visits and meetings, field trips, and block appointments to public agencies and health care providers.

Pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program
Weslaco ISD

Program Description

PROGRAM SETTING

This program operates at the district high school. Participating students include those in the full-day, regular high school program, those in a co-operative vocational program who are in school half a day and work the other half of the day, and those who attend both high school and night school.

The program operates during the fall and spring semesters with limited child care services during summer months for enrolled or co-operative students.

INSTRUCTION

Students participating in this program are enrolled in the regular or night school academic classes offered at the high school. Schedules permitting, these students enroll in a child development/parenting class offered by the homemaking teacher who serves as program manager.

The child development and parenting instructional sequence is set up so that students emerge from the sequence with the courses required by DHS for certification as a child care provider.

Horizons Inc., a youth services organization, comes to the campus once a week to offer a seminars on topics in parenting and child development. Remediation and acceleration are available through the night school that meets on the high school campus while tutoring is organized through the campus at-risk program.

COUNSELING

Academic and personal counseling are provided by school counselors, with the campus at-risk counselor taking the lead role for students in the program. The counseling component of the campus at-risk program includes 48-hour retreats at which participants focus on self-image and decision making skills. Health counseling is provided by the school nurse.

In conjunction with its weekly instructional sessions, Horizons, Inc. provides personal, family planning, and occupational counseling.

CASE MANAGEMENT

Ad hoc case management is provided through the combined efforts of various staff, including the homemaking teacher, the nurse, the counselor, the assistant principal, and the child care manager.

Information on available services and how to access them is included in the essential elements of the child development class offered through the homemaking department.

CHILD CARE

In awaiting the establishment of its own child care facility, the program contracts with community providers for child care. Child care is available on weekdays during the regular academic year but is limited during the summer to the offspring of enrolled students and those of students whose work is part of a co-operative program. The child care providers are also contracted to provide babysitting for children while their parents attend night classes. The program's child care manager coordinates placement, usually at a site near the student's home.

TRANSPORT

District buses are used for program-sponsored activities and the program arranges for transport between school and child care sites for students attending night school. However, no work-related transportation is provided and students attending school during the day use private or regular district transportation.

PROGRAM PLANNING

The homemaking teacher plans program activities in conjunction with the campus assistant principal and at-risk coordinator and the program director.

STAFF TRAINING

Program staff are encouraged to attend professional meetings and conferences on issues relevant to teenage parenting.

Pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program
Wichita Falls ISD

Program Description

This program operates on two of the district's three high school campuses during the fall and spring semesters. During the two-month summer session, the program operates on one high school campus, combining a half-day academic curriculum with a half-day parenting curriculum.

INSTRUCTION

An experimental Teen Parenting class that is a credit-earning elective in the Home Economics curriculum is offered one period a day to participating students on two high school campuses. Through this class, students obtain information about child development, parenting, child care, health, nutrition, clothing, cooking, and educational opportunities. Guest speakers from community agencies provide services and information. Computer-aided instruction is part of the Teen Parenting class. Participating students work through child development software packages on personal computers. Students can also select from software dealing with self-esteem, career choices, interviewing skills or resume development, as well as other topics.

Students in the pilot program are required to take a vocational course elective but earn academic credits through either regularly scheduled courses or a competency-based, accelerated learning option. This option also includes GED preparation.

COUNSELING

A vocational counselor provides testing, makes tutorial referrals, and provides career and academic counseling. This counselor assists in the development of an Individual Education and Career Plan (IECP) and secures report cards and transcripts. The Teacher/Coordinator provides counseling and case management and works with T.E.C. for job placement. Regular campus counselors test students and provide information on vocational options and non-traditional careers.

The counseling activities of district staff are extended by nursing students of Midwestern State University who act as mentors, visiting students on campus to provide support. Several nursing staff members provide counseling and materials in early child development. A program advisory council made up of female professionals from the community sponsors an annual Teen Parenting Conference that affords an opportunity for group counseling. Group counseling also occurs in the context of the Teen Parenting class.

CASE MANAGEMENT

The teacher/coordinator discusses plans and problems with each student and follows up with home visits, community assistance, and job placement efforts. There is on-going coordination with DHS to keep abreast of changes childcare provisions for AFDC recipients. Coordination effort also includes TDH, family planning, prenatal education and birth preparation, and the district's program for single parents and homemakers. Students are followed for a year after graduation.

CHILD CARE

Child care is available five days a week during school hours through Head Start or a private agency contracted by the pilot program. Placement in a care facility convenient to home, school, or work is made by the student with guidance from family and the teacher/coordinator. During summer months, child care is available only for the offspring of enrolled students.

TRANSPORTATION

Mini buses are provided by the program to transport students to school and carry and pick up children from child care. The buses are also used to provide transportation for summer school, field trips and to workshops. The Teacher/Coordinator may take students and children to pre/postnatal appointments and service agencies to protect attendance by missing only minimal class time. The Teacher/Coordinator makes transportation arrangements.

PROGRAM PLANNING

Maintaining Records: The Teacher/Coordinator works with the school nurse and attendance clerks at each pilot school to keep updated records and monitor attendance closely. The Teacher/Coordinator also keeps records of each student served in the program and makes notes of personal contacts with students and other service agencies.

STAFF TRAINING

The Teacher/Coordinator receives ATA credit for district seminars twice a year. Program staff also attends workshops (state level) for Teen-Parents. Program staff has also visited another school district that had a similar parenting program. In addition to Teen-Parent workshops, staff also participates in workshops in Early Childhood Education at Midwestern State University.

Pilot Parent Involvement and Parent Education Programs

Description

Goals

As their title implies, these programs seek to educate parents and to involve them in their children's education. What parent education means and the manner in which parents are to become involved both differ among these programs. All programs take measures to increase parents' knowledge of child development, parenting skills, and learning. Some expand their educational focus to include topics such as pregnancy counseling, health promotion, adult literacy, accessing support services, and establishing community networks. In the belief that a person who has more fully realized his or her potential is a more effective parent, some programs tailor their educational offerings to foster the development of parents as individuals.

Because educated, informed parents are likely to involve themselves in their children's education, there is a natural link between parent education and parent involvement. These programs nurture and expand that link by encouraging parents to share in the school's decision-making process through participation in task forces or campus committees. Although differing in specifics, all of these programs foster parents' understanding that the child's education is a collaboration between the home and the school.

Participants

The parents participating in these programs are young, low-income and/or minority individuals raising infants, toddlers, and young children in marginal, stressful environments. Many head single-parent households and a substantial number are themselves students. (In fact, three of the programs provide services to student parents who are also enrolled in the pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program.) Most of the children whose parents are involved in these programs are less than three years of age, although parents of fifth- and sixth-grade students are found in some programs.

Components

Five pilots use the Parents as Teachers program as their primary educational component, two employ the Practical Parenting program developed by the Texas Association of School Boards, two utilize locally-devised offerings in parenting and child development, and one involves its parents in the district's character education program. All the Parents as Teachers sites include a family resource center with checkout materials and developmental screening with referral. The Practical Parenting sites offer their participants workshops on network and coalition building.

Other services of these pilots include transportation of parents and children to program, school, social service, and/or health appointments, formal case management and counseling, literacy training, peer support groups and tutors, and an employment and social services clearinghouse. One site also maintains supplies to meet families' emergency needs for basic necessities like food and clothing. Where appropriate, programs also help enroll children in school.

Settings

School campuses are used in all programs for family resource centers and activities such as developmental screening, parent education and literacy classes, and parents' group meetings. Five programs also make use of facilities in the community for program activities. These community sites include housing projects and churches. Seven of the ten programs conduct regularly scheduled home visits.

Time Frame

These programs operate throughout the calendar year. To accommodate parents' schedules, most sites schedule program activities after school and work hours and/or on weekends. Home visits and group meetings are generally scheduled monthly although programs offering case management services report that delivery of such services requires more frequent, even daily, contacts.

Resources

Programs that use Parents as Teachers or Practical Parenting require trained parent educators. These parent educators are usually certified teachers. Additional campus-level staff involved in these programs include classroom teachers, guidance counselors, and social workers. The resource requirements of these programs include materials for use by parents in and following structured activities on parenting and child development as well as materials and equipment for literacy training.

Both the human and material resources of these programs are substantially enlarged through the volunteer efforts of both the parents themselves and community organizations.

Evaluation

Implementation

The 10 pilot sites established during the spring of 1990 served a total of 1,129 mothers and 225 fathers through August 31, 1990. The comparable figures for the programs' first full year of operation in FY91 were 1,618 mothers and 330 fathers. Hence, women participated in these programs far more than did men. Staff estimated that these programs reached not more than a third of the parents that met enrollment criteria.

In addition to the non-enrolled parents that they served during FY91, these programs also served 242 parents who were enrolled students. As with non-enrolled parents, mothers accounted for more than 90 percent of the parent students participating in these programs.

Of the parents participating in these programs during FY91, 65 percent were Hispanic, 24 percent were African American, 10 percent were Anglo, and less than one percent were Asian. Twenty-eight percent of the enrolled students of these parents were limited English proficient and 63 percent were eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.

Program participants were provided in excess of 3,000 hours of specialized training during FY91 - training in parenting and child development based upon standard or locally-developed curricula and complemented by structured activities extending the training into the home. Training sessions took place both in group meetings and during home visits. As would be expected, program providers took pains to integrate the educational content of group meetings with that of individual home visits.

Programs made liberal use of resource materials to bolster their training efforts. While books, handouts, and worksheets were the most frequently used materials, programs also gave or loaned parents educational toys, games, and puzzles, instructional kits, video tapes, computers and software, and infant car seats. Given their reliance on printed material and the high number of Hispanic parents they served, these programs made special efforts to obtain or produce Spanish language resources.

Fewer than five percent of parents left these programs during their first partial year of operation. By way of contrast, as many as 19 percent of parents involved with these programs left them during FY91. The reasons for this difference are unclear but could include improved record keeping and more vigorous recruiting of parents who are both hard to reach and hard to keep.

As was the case in their first year, these programs were highly regarded by parents during FY91. Over 93 percent of the parents responding to an opinion survey conducted during the spring of 1991 thought that the program was helpful and worthy of their time and energy; that the program should continue in their districts and spread to other districts in Texas; and that the program made them better informed of their child's progress and better able to contribute to that progress.

Teachers and staff also held these programs in high regard. No fewer than 87 percent of these survey respondents believed the programs worth their time and effort; felt that the programs enabled schools and families to work better together; and expected that children would ultimately do better in school because of these programs.

Almost a third of the children whose parents participated in these programs were not old enough for prekindergarten during FY91. Thus, only limited data were available with which to examine effects of these programs on student performance. In any event, comparisons between enrolled students of participating parents and those of non-participating parents revealed no systematic differences in terms of attendance, course grades, scores on standardized reading or mathematics achievement tests, promotion, or local indicators of academic progress.

Program Costs

Cost surveys were conducted at eight of the 10 sites offering these programs. Because three of those sites combined parent involvement and teen parenting programs into a single pilot effort, cost data were available from five programs organized solely as pilot parent education and parent involvement efforts. Only those data are reported here.

The average annual program cost was $110,535 with individual programs ranging from $56,166 to $185,633.

On average, 45% of program costs went into direct instructional activities while planning, training, and administration accounted for an additional 44% of costs. However, one program incurred as much as 78% of its costs in planning, training, and administration while another incurred only 20% of its costs in such activities. Similarly, some programs incurred more than half their costs in direct instructional activities while others incurred less than a third of their costs in direct instruction.

These differences in the pattern of program costs followed no obvious pattern with regard to district type (urban-suburban-rural), district or program size, or the program's geographic location. Proportionally higher planning-training-administration costs seemed to be associated with the adoption of standard parenting curricula for local use while greater instructional costs typified programs that created parenting curricula from locally available sources or programs whose extended curricula included not only parenting but also literacy and employment preparation.

Concerns

Several sites reported initial difficulties in recruiting parents into and maintaining their attendance at program activities. These difficulties were in part a function of initially unrealistic recruitment goals, as programs discovered that parents with young children were not only difficult to contact but, when contacted, could also be somewhat wary of program activities such as home visits. Moreover, parents whose own educational experiences had been less-than-optimal and whose recent contact with school personnel often involved problems with their enrolled children exhibited an understandable reluctance to attend meetings on school premises. This last factor helped to explain the initially poor attendance at group meetings, as did the child care and transportation difficulties facing parents wishing to attend such meetings.

Programs responded to these recruitment and attendance problems in a number of ways. These solutions included expansion of service areas and contact with more parents to fill program rosters, providing incentives for parents to join the programs, scheduling home visits only after parents had participated in program activities in less intimate settings, arranging for transportation to and from program activities, and providing child care at such activities. Group meetings were scheduled at various times to accommodate both employed and at-home parents. Certain meetings were tailored for particular groups (e.g., single parents, monolingual parents, working parents). Programs also scaled back both the caseloads and instructional (but not visit) schedules of parent educators to foster a more relaxed and confident relationship between parent and program.

Several pilot sites also encountered difficulties in locating parent educational materials in languages other than English. While awaiting the appearance of such materials in the educational marketplace, program providers displayed impressive ingenuity in both modifying commercial materials and producing local materials to support their educational efforts with parents with no or limited English.

As programs earned the trust of parents and began delivery of their educational services, the basic human service needs of many of the program families became evident. To some extent and in some sites, these needs were not particularly well addressed within the training curriculum and schedule of contacts planned for the program. As one program director suggested, a parent's interest in techniques of child management was hard to hold when the parent was wondering how to find shoes for the growing child. Similarly, a monthly home visit hardly sufficed when a family was daily concerned with how to feed its children. Hence, programs whose ultimate focus was parent education acquired the immediate goal of doing what they could to address the acute needs facing families with young children.

Pilot Parent Education and Parent Involvement Program

Program Descriptions

Fort Worth ISD
Harlingen ISD
Houston ISD
Morton ISD
Ysleta ISD

Cost Survey
Pilot Parent Education and Parent Involvement Program
Fort Worth ISD

Program Description

This program operates during the fall and spring semesters, serving parents whose children attend or will attend school on one of 14 campuses. Three of these elementary campuses are among the district's five poorest neighborhoods.

Instruction

The instructional component of this program is derived from the Parents as Teachers curriculum, adapted for use with a population confronted by situations of risk and checked for cultural sensitivity. Instruction takes place during monthly home visits and group meetings. The instructional component of group meetings is complemented by "make it and take it" workshops and presentations by guest speakers. Meetings convene in various locales, including school campuses, the district's early childhood center, day care centers, and community rooms in housing projects. Meeting times are adapted to parents' needs, so program classes operate before, during, and after school as well as on weekends.

Support Activities

Parent educators from the program offer personal guidance to participating parents on both an individual basis and in groups. These educators also conduct developmental and language assessments of the children of participating parents while district staff provide hearing and vision screens.

The program's parent educators refer parents to appropriate district or community agencies when and as needs arise.

Volunteers provide child care during group meetings and program workshops.

Planning, Training, and Administration

Planning for meeting topics, guest speakers, and workshop activities is accomplished during weekly meetings of the program's parent educators. These educators also plan and present community presentations as part of the program's recruitment effort. Planning activities also include review and adaptation of the Parents as Teachers curriculum.

Parent educators attend district inservice as well as statewide symposia and inservice. Besides being responsible for maintaining a Parent Resource Center and Toy Lending Library, the lead parent educator conducts refresher sessions in screening techniques with the other parent educators during the year.

The lead parent educator assists the district's Early Childhood Education Coordinator in program administration, completes program reports, supervises program volunteers, and maintains communications with the program's advisory committee and community agencies.

Pilot Parent Education and Parent Involvement Program
Harlingen ISD

Program Description

Instruction

The instructional activities of this program take place on school campuses, in community settings, and in the homes of program participants. These settings include three elementary schools.

A parenting curriculum, derived from the Practical Parenting Education program of TASB, is delivered on each of three school campuses by district parent education staff with program parents and parent educators in attendance. Sessions of an hour's duration are held weekly during a six week period each school year.

Parenting Centers established on each of the three campuses offer program participants opportunities to develop both a sense of ownership of and competence in school activities. Such activities include preparing manipulatives and other materials to be used in the classroom during a science unit, constructing crafts whose sale at a school fair generates funds for school activities, and providing clerical assistance in the school office.

During home visits conducted approximately every other week throughout the year, parent educators from the pilot program follow up topics initiated at the parent education classes and activities begun at the campus Parenting Centers.

Program participants can attend GED preparation classes that meet three nights per week. These classes are taught by district staff and meet in both district and community facilities.

Various instructional activities take place at the housing projects where program families reside. Seminars on topics of interest to parents are offered approximately every two weeks throughout the year. These seminars feature presentations by service providers and other professionals on issues such as nutrition, health care, and self-improvement.

The program's parent educators also teach ESL classes at the housing projects. These classes meet in day and evening sessions three times each week throughout the year.

During summer months, high school students provide tutoring to program parents.

The program designates certain parents as "block captains" whose task it is to inform other parents of the program's activities, including instruction. Approximately one captain is selected for every ten families, with selection based largely upon the geographic location of program families within the housing projects.

The program's instructional activities are coordinated with the district's annual parent involvement conference.

Support Services

Informal counseling occurs during home visits while peer support and counseling is available during parenting education sessions and at the Parenting Centers. The program does not engage the services of professional counselors.

Family service, education, and employment needs are assessed during the program's initial home visit and reviewed during subsequent visits throughout the year. Parent educators assist parents in accessing services and model for parents effective techniques for dealing with service providers and educators. Presentations by service providers during topical seminars complement the program's service coordination efforts.

Volunteer parents, PTA members, and students provide supervised child care while parents attend parenting and ESL classes.

The program contracts with the district to provide transportation for parents attending school-based activities such as GED classes, open houses, and PTA conferences. The program also transports parents to service providers on an as needed basis.

Local support for the program includes donations by the Junior Service League to cover the costs of GED testing and a donation from the non-profit Harlingen Education Foundation to the district parent involvement conference.

Planning, Training, and Administration

The program coordinator meets weekly with parent educators to review program objectives, evaluate program implementation, and make necessary adjustments to the program.

The program modified the Practical Parenting Education curriculum prior to applying it in parenting education classes. This modification is ongoing and involves regular meetings between program administrators and parent educators.

Parent educators attend TASB training for delivering the Practical Parent Education curriculum. These staff also attend conferences and workshops on topics relevant to parent education and parent involvement. The program coordinator trains the parent educators in topics relevant to parent education and involvement.

The program coordinator collects information required by the TEA for program evaluation purposes and deals with program relevant issues within the district administration.

Pilot Parent Education and Parent Involvement Program
Houston ISD

Program Description

This program serves three campuses and operates during the fall and spring semesters. Most program activities take place during school hours with one Saturday field trip per campus during the year.

Instruction

The program's instructional component includes monthly parent workshops and field trips for parents and students. The workshops are of two hours duration and meet in the school's cafeteria. The initial workshop is an orientation session to introduce parents to the school's culture and practices. Subsequent workshops include presentations by speakers from community agencies. Topics covered during workshops include those relevant to child rearing (e.g., study skills, discipline, health tips, emotional development, peer pressure) as well as those of more general interest to adults (e.g., sewing, cake decoration). An agenda distributed at each workshop contains contact information for the presentation (e.g., health care agenda contains telephone numbers and addresses of local community health clinics). As with the program's newsletter and flyers, all printed material distributed at workshops is provided in English and Spanish. Each campus also maintains a parent resource center stocked with materials, manipulatives, books, and activity sheets that complement the topical workshops.

The program's field trips include visits to museums (e.g., Fine Arts, Science) as well as an end-of-year boat trip for families and school staff.

Support Activities

Parents travel on their own to school-based activities. The program contracts with the district for field trip transportation.

Planning, Training, and Administration

Program planning begins with an interest survey of parents to identify topics for presentation in program workshops. Program staff then plan the year's workshops and field trips. The plan is reviewed and coordinated with each school principal before implementation.

The program produces a monthly newsletter containing a calendar of coming events as well as contributions from school staff (e.g., counselors). The newsletter is distributed through student take home, as are flyers reminding parents of upcoming workshops.

Staff training goes on throughout the year in workshops sponsored by the district and the regional service center and in monthly meetings of the mental health association. Program staff also make workshop presentations.

The program director is responsible for the program's budget and correspondence with the TEA. Program staff are responsible for the completion of reports required by the agency. A secretary provides assistance on program-related tasks.

Pilot Parent Education and Parent Involvement Program
Morton ISD

Program Description

Instruction

This program is based at the "Parents Plus" center, a three-room structure some distance from the district's elementary campus. The center operates during the fall and spring semesters and is staffed by a coordinator-teacher and an assistant.

The program's instructional activities are based on the Parents as Teachers (PAT) curriculum. Since the PAT curriculum is designed for the 0-3 age group, the program uses portions of the "Building Bridges" curriculum to provide supplemental activities for older preschoolers.

Instructional activities take place during home visits, group meetings at the center, and meetings held at the high school campus for student parents. Home visits are conducted weekly, group meetings for parents and children occur daily during morning and afternoon sessions at the center, and meetings for student parents take place twice weekly during the homeroom period.

While structured parent-child activities are the heart of the program's instructional component, a variety of other activities complement this instruction. The program conducts physical, perceptual, and language screenings, offers informal English-as-a-Second-Language classes for parents and children, utilizes computer programs to reinforce language development and foster cooperative parent-child interaction, and invites speakers to address parents on topics such as nutrition and child safety. The program also operates a Toy Lending Library and Resource Center from which participants may borrow toys, video and audio tapes and equipment, books, and infant car seats.

Support Activities

Although counseling on issues in parenting and child development is implicit in many of the program's instructional activities, the program does not include a formal counseling component.

The program does not offer a case management component but does include in its Resource Center informative material on support services for families with young children.

Child care is provided during parent meetings.

Limited transport between to and from the center is provided on an as needed basis by program staff who use their private vehicles.

Planning, Training, and Administration

The coordinator-teacher prepares a monthly schedule of parent-child activities to be conducted during home visits and meetings at the Parents Plus center. This preparation includes the construction of manipulatives and the development of instructional materials in English and Spanish.

The program also prepares and circulates a monthly newsletter and calendar of events to notify participants and potential participants of activities and services of the program. Radio spots concerning the program are prepared for broadcast on the local radio station while bulletins concerning special activities and meetings are placed in local businesses and the weekly local newspaper.

Support, advice, referrals, and ideas for program activities are provided by a Community Advisory Board. This board meets twice yearly and is made up of business, parent, district, and community representatives. Additional planning guidance comes from the county extension home economist, surveys of parents, and school personnel.

PAT certification of the coordinator-teacher requires initial training at the national or state center followed by approved inservice training for yearly recertification. In addition, the district administrator supervising the pilot program attends an overview of PAT program goals and curriculum. Program staff attend regional and state conferences and workshops on topics such as teen parenting and working with three-year-olds.

The primary administrative duties for the program rest with the district's administrative assistant who supervises the pilot program. These duties include interviewing and hiring staff, record keeping for fiscal and evaluation purposes, reporting on the program to district trustees and the TEA, organizing Advisory Board meetings, and responding to other schools' enquiries about the program.

Pilot Parent Education and Parent Involvement Program
Ysleta ISD

Program Description

This program operates during the fall and spring semesters, serving parents whose children attend or will attend a neighborhood elementary school. Many of the program's activities take place at the housing project where the majority of the program's parents live.

Instruction

This program's instructional activities include parent workshops and after school tutoring at the housing project site, field trips for parent and children, "staff development" presentations by school faculty in which parents are encouraged to become involved in school activities, a parents' conference in the summer, and parents' attendance at district and regional conferences.

Support Activities

Child care is provided at the housing project site during program meetings and field trips. Children receiving care include toddlers, preschoolers, and enrolled students. (Some enrolled students receive tutoring during parents' meetings and/or field trips.)

Parents assemble at the housing project site to be transported by bus to off-site program activities.

Planning, Training, and Administration

Planning for parents' meetings, field trips, and related activities is the responsibility of the program director.

The program director trains child care aides on an as needed basis while tutors used by the program receive training through a district-wide program.

The program director administers the program in conjunction with district and campus administrators.

Technology Demonstration Pilot Programs

Description

Goals

These programs were established to explore the application of technology to student learning, instructional delivery, and classroom management. While one site is investigating the effect of technology on teacher productivity, the remaining sites are integrating a variety of computer and other technologies into the instructional process. The incorporation of technology is curriculum-wide in one program, supports the teaching of science in four programs, focuses on reading or writing in three programs, and targets mathematics at two sites. Various applications of telecommunications are under examination at four sites.

In one program the technology supports the initial phase in a campus-wide restructuring of an elementary school, another program is a cooperative venture between a school district and an institution of higher learning, and a third program is a collaborative effort between a district, a university, and a computer manufacturer.

Participants

Students, teachers, and parents participate in these programs. Since programs are located on early childhood, elementary, middle, and high school campuses, student participants range from prekindergarten students to graduating seniors.

Components

Programs offering computer-assisted instruction generally rely upon commercial products configured as stand-alone units or networked into systems. Instruction is typically paced by the student's mastery and keyed to approved essential elements. Because they are mastery-based, these products provide students, teachers, and parents rapid feedback regarding progress and the need for remediation. In one site, feedback on high school students' compositions comes from graduate education majors who interact at a distance over a network. Portable computers with instructional and/or communications software that students check out for use at home are another application of telecommunications to learning. In programs that use take-home computers, computer-literacy training provides parents a means of becoming involved in their children's' educational activities.

Systems used in instructional delivery range in sophistication from commercial units incorporating laser videodiscs designed for the classroom to basic word processing and graphics applications that teachers must adapt and apply to their standard course offerings.

Settings

On school campuses, these programs operate in classrooms, in multi-unit computer "laboratories" adjacent to classrooms, and at single-unit sites dispersed throughout the school (e.g., libraries, science laboratories, faculty lounges and offices). Portable computers and modem links extend the operation of some programs beyond the school campus to homes and distant higher education campuses.

Time Frame

The activities made possible by the introduction of technology occur both during and outside of regular classroom periods. For the most part, these technology demonstration programs operate during the regular school year only.

Resources

The three main resource requirements of these programs are equipment, including computer hardware and software as well as sophisticated display systems, staff training that is practical and ongoing, and support of both the technical and curricular variety. These resources have to be deployed in a time frame that accommodates the long lead times associated with the acquisition of new technology, the assimilation of that technology by classroom teachers, and the development of administrative structures to support the technology.

These programs make extensive use of outside experts, who contributed over 900 consulting hours during the program's initial year, and volunteers, whose FY91 contribution exceeded 315 hours.

Evaluation

Implementation

As noted earlier, participants in the technology demonstration pilots included students, parents, and educators. In their limited operation during FY90, these programs involved 1069 students, 130 parents, and 54 educators. During FY91, 1206 students, 430 parents, and 60 educators participated in classes, training, or other organized activities as part of the technology demonstration pilots.

Technology was used to support instruction across a range of grades, from a low of 5 hours/week at secondary grade levels to as much as 25 hours/week in the primary grades. Similarly, the amount of time that technology was used to support professional activities ranged from about 9 hours/week at the primary grades to one hour/week at the secondary levels.

One program focused on technology's "empowering" the teaching professional while another applied technology across the curriculum. The remaining programs targeted the technology on specific subject areas--most often language arts, reading, or mathematics but also science and social studies.

All programs reported that students used technology during teacher-led instruction, in completing independent work during class time, and outside of regular classes in campus facilities such as libraries and computer labs. Six of the programs reported that students used technology to complete assigned work while at home and four said that the educational technology enabled students to interact with sites off campus or outside of the district. Indications of students' interest in using this technology came in numerous anecdotal reports of their requests for access to computer facilities before and after regular hours as well as on weekends.

Three programs expanded parents' access to educational technology by making that technology available outside of regular school hours and/or off of the school campus. Hence, 170 students were reported to have engaged in technology-based, structured activities with their parents while the parents of 128 students checked out computers and software from the program for use at home.

Teachers involved in these programs received over 650 hours of staff development in the application of educational technology. They most commonly used the technology to maintain student records (especially grades), to provide for individualized learning or interactive use by targeted students, and to create classroom materials such as transparencies, handouts, and worksheets. The technology was less frequently used in course planning, test development, and correspondence.

Although districts were not required to focus their technology demonstration efforts on any particular groups of students, pilot sites were asked to report on the number of students involved in those efforts who were making satisfactory progress according to local criteria. During FY90, satisfactory progress was noted in 72% of students entering participating classrooms at the start of program implementation. These limited data suggested that students involved in the technology demonstration pilots had much to gain academically from any improvement brought about by the incorporation of technology into their education. Data from the FY91 evaluation showed that 97% of students involved in these programs graduated or were promoted. Unfortunately, whatever significance might lie in this observation was obscured by the absence of appropriate contrast groups.

It is interesting to note that during each year of program operations, mothers and fathers were involved in the technology demonstration programs in a ratio of approximately two-to-one. This contrasted sharply with a comparable ratio of more than five-to-one in the pilot parent involvement programs. While preliminary, these results may have indicated that technology-based innovations are particularly effective at increasing paternal involvement in educational activities.

Surveys of students, parents, and teachers uncovered interesting similarities and differences in their perspectives on educational technology. At least 85% of students returning surveys felt that the technology was useful in their classroom activities and prepared them better for the future. Comments written on the back of survey forms expressed the fun and enjoyment that students felt in working with the technology. Parents likewise reported enjoying the technology and valuing its contribution to their child's current performance and future success.

Teachers' survey responses were more varied than those of students and parents. While over 70% of teachers thought that such programs were a good idea in their and others' schools, only 56% felt that they were able to use the technology to enhance their instruction during the school year while 61% judged the technology a useful tool in completing job duties. In keeping with the reported application of the technology to traditional instructional activities (e.g., creating classroom materials to support existing lesson plans), only slightly more than half of the teachers felt that the technology induced radical or substantial changes in their instruction of students.

Concerns

The difficulties encountered by these programs occurred in a predictable sequence. First came delays in the delivery and installation of equipment that are familiar to all technology users in and outside of the educational setting. As a result, even when the technology became available in the classroom, the semester's curriculum was often so far advanced that full introduction of the planned demonstration program would have been disruptive.

A second difficulty arose in the area of staff training. Some of the formal courses offered by vendors or higher university staff needed modification for classroom teachers who were interested not so much in how computers worked as in how computers could work in their classrooms. Program directors and teachers routinely reported that more than the planned time was required to effectively assimilate the technologies into instructional plans. Staff also reported that training would have to be ongoing if they were to exploit their emerging technological competence, one teacher commenting that it took time to know even what questions to ask. The difficulties encountered by teaching staff in training on the new technology presumably help to explain why so few parents received planned training in the use of computers.

As equipment and training difficulties abated, teachers encountered an issue that arises whenever the innovative is incorporated into the traditional: At what point does the traditional become an impediment to fully exploiting the innovative? In other words, as they became more fluent in the technology, teachers began to realize that technology challenged as well as complemented their instructional strategies and skills. In the absence of formal guidelines (and probably to the long-term profit of both teachers and students), teachers began a trial and error search for new ways of doing what they thought they already knew how to do. Sensing the time-consuming nature of that search, teachers expressed the need for not only sufficient planning time but also for appropriate support, understanding, and technical assistance from their districts.

Hence, complications in the procurement of equipment, the appropriateness of training, and incorporation of innovative technology combined to throw most of the technology demonstration programs behind schedule. This observation probably says more about the optimism of the original time frame for implementation than it does about the ultimate effectiveness of that implementation.

Expanding the Boundaries of School: Pilot Programs Established by the 71st Texas Legislature Final Report

SUMMARY

The pilot programs began their first year of operation after more than half of the 1989-90 school year had passed. They planned their second year of operation at a time when statewide uncertainty over funding for public education made districts hesitant to commit to new programs. Despite these difficulties, the pilot programs achieved admirable successes, serving in diverse and innovative ways substantial numbers of students, parents of students, and children of students. While the programs have had relatively little time to demonstrate consistent effects, their progress during the two years covered by this report is the foundation from which effects can be expected to emerge.

A variety of lessons were learned from these pilot programs and many of the lessons have been applied. Planning and implementing new education programs is always difficult. Experience with these pilots showed that this difficulty increases when funds to implement programs are awarded after the start of the school year or when funds to continue multiyear programs are awarded on a fiscal year-by-fiscal year basis. While too late to be of much help to these pilot programs, this lesson was considered in creating the administrative support for the innovative programs established by the 71st Legislature. The innovative programs' award cycle allows them to begin operations at the start of the school year while multiyear programs receive their full funding at the time of award.

While the funding arrangements for new programs concerned all of the pilot programs, other lessons related to specific programs. One set concerned the School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program. Opinion surveys, evaluation data, and cost surveys confirmed the observations of program staff that the real costs of keeping student parents enrolled and progressing toward graduation were incurred not during pregnancy but after the child was born. As well as responsive district and campus administrations, student parents need accessible child care, flexible transportation, and effective case management if they are to remain in school and earn credits toward graduation.

The statutory shift of funding for student parents out of special education and into the compensatory education allotment provides districts funds only for remedial and support services provided to pregnant students. As written, this statute makes it difficult for districts to provide effective but costly services to parenting students. While it has not been possible to alter the statute, it has proved possible to adopt administrative procedures that enable districts both to claim maximum compensatory education funds for services provided to pregnant students and to use those and other funds to provide effective services to students with young

children. Neither the need for nor the design of those administrative procedures would have been evident without the lessons learned from the pilot program.

Another program-specific lesson concerned the in-school High School Equivalency Examination program. The statute establishing this program originally required the participation of all districts with dropout rates in the top 25% of the state. Analyses in support of the pilot sites in this program found that this criterion required many small districts to participate -- districts whose absolute numbers of dropouts were too low to justify the costs of implementing an in-school GED program. This lesson from the pilot program was applied in recommending that the criterion be modified to require participation of districts with dropout rates in the top 25% statewide when that rate reflected at least 20 students. This modification was in fact adopted by the Legislature.

A final illustration of how the pilot programs eased the way for statewide implementation comes from the prekindergarten for three-year-olds program. Successive legislatures amended statute to provide prekindergarten funding for three-year-olds and enacted legislation requiring prekindergarten programs to comply with applicable child care licensing standards. While some pilot prekindergartens served groups of three-year-olds in classrooms, programs in other pilot sites met with groups of children in sites other than schools and/or served children on an individual basis through home visits. Without the benefit of the pilot programs, the board rules implementing these various statutes might well have been written in a way that effectively exempted non-school prekindergartens from meeting child care licensing standards and ruled out home visit prekindergartens because they could not comply with such standards. Since each type of prekindergarten appeared an effective alternative to the traditional school-based program, the board rules were written so that programs meeting with groups of children outside of school facilities complied with licensing standards while home visit programs were exempted from compliance.

Thus, the lessons gleaned from pilot programs had direct and beneficial effects on the statewide implementation of similar programs. While much more could be learned if the pilots were followed over longer periods, these initial lessons are evidence that pilot programs can play an effective role in the state's attempt to enhance education for all children.

As valuable as those lessons were, however, the pilot programs offered equally valuable insights to all of the institutions involved with the pilot effort - the Legislature that created the programs, the Agency that administered them, and the districts that designed and implemented them.

Since the success of a new program depends upon administrative coordination within a district, district and campus offices need to harmonize their activities from the earliest stage in planning. While such coordination could be observed in most sites, such was not always the case among these pilots. In some instances, the central office composed a competitive application, pilot funds were awarded to the district, and only then was the campus on which the pilot would operate informed of its selection. In other instances, a proposal generated at the campus level received pro forma treatment in district offices, so the program created by that proposal became an orphan within the district.

It is probably not important whether program awards are to districts, as in the pilot programs reviewed here, or to campuses, as in the innovative programs created by Senate Bill 1. It is certainly important that such programs have the coordinated support of both the district office and the staff of the campus on which they operate.

Pilot programs are generally intended to accommodate only a portion of those students in a district who stand to gain from participating in them. This mismatch between resources and needs creates a tension between the administrative agency, which wants to evaluate the effects of planned programs, and pilot staff, who understandably want to serve as many students as possible. Besides inflating budget requests, the tendency to extend programs beyond their planned capacity threatens to dilute resources and jeopardize effectiveness. This has consequences beyond the boundaries of the district because a program that cannot be shown to be effective would be an unlikely candidate for statewide implementation.

Districts deciding to operate pilot programs learn that the evaluative function of those programs requires reports on a wider range of topics than would be the case for regular, formula-funded programs. Not a few districts come to view the resources invested in meeting the reporting requirements of pilot programs as diversions that reduce the number of students served rather than as necessary costs incurred in the conduct of those unique programs.

As districts with pilot programs discover the unique features of operating such programs, so the agency that administers the pilots finds it necessary to accommodate the special circumstances of those programs. To the extent that it places program expertise, fiscal oversight, and evaluation responsibility in different departments, the agency complicates its administration of the pilot programs. Even if those departments achieve a measure of coordination in administering the pilot programs, the districts continue to see considerable room for improvement.

Thus, pilot programs challenge the agency to devise a means of communicating with those programs, if not through a single voice, then at least in a coordinated fashion. Given such coordination, the agency enhances pilot programs. Without that coordination, the agency becomes an obstacle to pilot programs.

These programs offer insights to the Legislature that created the pilots and mandated this report. One insight is that the reporting deadlines imposed on pilot programs must be realistic if they are to be meaningful. Among these pilots, for instance, is a program for at-risk children whose true effects and accurate costs are to be reported little more than three semesters after the effective date of the statute that created the program. Besides placing a premium on rapid rather than considered implementation, such a deadline invites inappropriate interpretations of preliminary, fragmented results. The commitment to consider pilot results in the formulation of policy on public education brings with it the necessity of granting pilot programs a reasonable opportunity to demonstrate effects.

A second insight offered by the pilots is that statute and rule should be used to nurture programs, not specify their content. When statute or rule create a particular type of program, it becomes impossible to examine other, potentially cost-effective alternatives. Hence, the elementary at-risk pilots yield information on the effectiveness of having master's level social workers operate with school counselors. Because the enabling legislation required the programs to employ only master's level social workers, however, no information can come from that pilot on the effectiveness of individuals with other types of social work credentials.

In addition to precluding the consideration of alternative approaches, overly-specific statutes may actually hinder programs and ill-serve participants. For example, the statute creating the pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program requires all sites to provide certain program components, including job readiness training and instruction in parenting and child development. Such components are appropriate for many but by no means all of the students enrolled in the pilot. Even so obvious a required component as the provision of child care complicates programs in communities where infant care by non-relatives runs counter to local custom and tradition.

Thus, a final lesson from the pilot programs is the familiar call for local control over the design and implementation of programs to improve public education.

Appendix A

Districts with Pilot Sites

Prekindergarten for Three-Year-Olds

Arlington
Brazosport
Brownsville
Clint
Dallas
Ector County
Edgewood
Hubbard
Socorro

Academic Programs for Children Below Grade Level

Dickinson
Dimmitt
Fort Worth
Garland
Hubbard
Kerrville
Lancaster
Longview
McAllen
Sabinal
Socorro
Spring Branch
Waco

High School Equivalency Examination Program

Brownsville
Brownwood
Deer Park
Fort Worth
Lamar
Lubbock
Plainview
Tuloso-Midway
Waco
Weslaco
Wichita Falls

Program for Elementary At-Risk Students

Arlington
Cleburne
Houston
Spring
Ysleta

Established
in FY90

- Abilene
- Amarillo
- Austin
- Bastrop
- Beaumont
- Bryan
- Corpus Christi
- Dallas
- Del Valle
- Ector County
- Fort Worth
- Frenship
- Galena Park
- Galveston
- Harlandale
- Longview
- Lubbock
- Nacogdoches
- Northside
- San Marcos
- Seguin
- Spring Branch
- Temple
- Terrell
- Wichita Falls
- Region XIX
  - Clint
  - El Paso
  - Fabens
  - Socorro
  - Ysleta

Established
in FY91

- Beeville
- Channelview
- Coldspring-Oakhurst
- Eagle Pass
- Edgewood
- Gainesville Cooperative
  - Era
  - Gainesville
- Harlingen
- Hays Consolidated
- Irving
- Lamar Consolidated
- Liberty
- Lockhart
- Marble Falls
- Manor
- McAllen
- Newton
- Paris
- Pharr-San Juan-Alamo
- Sweetwater Cooperative
  - Colorado
  - Lorraine
  - Roscoe
  - Sweetwater
  - Westbrook
- Texas City
- Tyler
- Victoria
- Waco
- Waxahachie Cooperative
  - Avalon
  - Ferris
  - Italy
  - Milford
  - Waxahachie
- Weslaco

Parent Education and Parent Involvement Program

Amarillo
Bryan
Del Valle
Fort Worth
Harlingen
Houston
Morton
Terrell
Tyler
Ysleta

Technology Demonstration Program

Harlingen
Hurst Euless Bedford
McAllen
Mesquite
Pottsboro
Somerset
Temple
West

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

TITLE VI, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; THE MODIFIED COURT ORDER, CIVIL ACTION 5281, FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT, EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS, TYLER DIVISION

Reviews of local education agencies pertaining to compliance with Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964 and with specific requirements of the Modified Court Order, Civil Action No. 5281, Federal District Court, Eastern District of Texas, Tyler Division are conducted periodically by staff representatives of the Texas Education Agency. These reviews cover at least the following policies and practices:

(1) acceptance policies on student transfers from other school districts;

(2) operation of school bus routes or runs on a non-segregated basis;

(3) nondiscrimination in extracurricular activities and the use of school facilities;

(4) nondiscriminatory practices in the hiring, assigning, promoting, paying, demoting, reassigning, or dismissing of faculty and staff members who work with children;

(5) enrollment and assignment of students without discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin;

(6) nondiscriminatory practices relating to the use of a student's first language; and

(7) evidence of published procedures for hearing complaints and grievances.

In addition to conducting reviews, the Texas Education Agency staff representatives check complaints of discrimination made by a citizen or citizens residing in a school district where it is alleged discriminatory practices have occurred or are occurring.

Where a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act is found, the findings are reported to the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education.

If there is a direct violation of the Court Order in Civil Action No. 5281 that cannot be cleared through negotiation, the sanctions required by the Court Order are applied.

TITLE VII, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964 AS AMENDED; EXECUTIVE ORDERS 11246 AND 11375; TITLE IX, EDUCATION AMENDMENTS; REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 AS AMENDED; 1974 AMENDMENTS TO THE WAGE-HOUR LAW EXPANDING THE AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 1967; VIETNAM ERA VETERANS READJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1972 AS AMENDED; AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990; AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1991.

The Texas Education Agency shall comply fully with the nondiscrimination provisions of all Federal and State laws and regulations by assuring that no person shall be excluded from consideration for recruitment, selection, appointment, training, promotion, retention, or any other personnel action, or be denied any benefits or participation in any educational programs or activities which it operates on the grounds of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, handicap, age, or veteran status or a disability requiring accommodation (except where age, sex, or handicap constitute a bona fide occupational qualification necessary to proper and efficient administration). The Texas Education Agency is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer.

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